

Summary: Running away wasn't a planned decision for a young Harry Potter. Getting sucked into a whole new world of the unbelievable and deadly secrets wasn't something he expected. However, sometimes the unplanned and unexpected are exactly what a person needs.

WARNING (READ ALL OF THIS FIRST):

I will say right now...that after reading ALL of this warning, if you don't think this fic is for you, then I kindly ask that you don't read it. If you do continue on, I ask that you do not complain about how NON-CANON it may seem. I am giving you warning now, so don't tell me about it.

This is a HARRY-CENTRIC AU. It will be a fairly long story, and will be similar to a novel. So, you won't get a quick read. Therefore, you won't get answers to your questions immediately. You must remember at all times that this is an AU. Forget about me rewriting what J.K. wrote chapter by chapter. Things will be happening differently.

I will, however, use all seven books as references when concerning certain events and settings. In this story characters will be developed in a way I see fit according to the new situations they are put in. I will not be doing bashing. That means I will not purposefully make any character seem retarded just because I don't like them. I will base all characters from their canon personas. To me, Dumbledore is a good hearted, but manipulative and scheming, old man. I saw Ron as being a bit of an insecure, jealous, hot head. In my opinion, Hermione was a tad over bearing, but a true friend. In my eyes, Ginny went from being a love sick little girl to being a Mary Sue, J.K. never did fully develop her character. I'm sorry if we don't share the same opinion about them, but this is how it is going to be.


There will be OCs in this story. However, I give you my promise that all the original main characters I added into the fic will be well developed. They will not be thrown in ambiguously as a cardboard cutout.

You will be introduced to the main original characters in the first Part of this story. I am hoping this will continue on to have many Parts, broken down to: pre-Hogwarts, then all seven years at Hogwarts. Part One will be short-shots focusing on Harry's life before he goes

to Hogwarts (the first 8 Chapters). This part will be used for basis later on. Since it is before Hogwarts and this is an AU, most of the characters mentioned in the first part will be OCs.

Again, this is an AU. Don't mistake this warning as gibberish and a joke. What you are about to read is laid out right in front of you. I highly suggest you take it seriously. If this doesn't sound like your party, hit the BACK BUTTON. If you do continue on against your better judgment, don't come running to me and complaining about any of what I have warned you about. Everyone who is one board, please do enjoy the fic.

Disclaimer: I state no claim to anything you may recognize as being canon in this fic. Sadly, I do not own the Harry Potter Universe and never will. I am just borrowing these lovely characters, places, and themes from J. K. Rowling.

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## THE BLADE OF KNIGHT

By

Dream of Many Dreams


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## PART ONE

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## THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

It has been said something as small as the flutter of a butterfly's wing can ultimately cause a typhoon halfway around the world. - Chaos Theory

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Running into Disaster – May 1988

His knees hit the linoleum hard. He threw his hands out, trying desperately to prevent the rest of his body from connecting with the

floor. His book-bag opened, and the contents went flying. He knew there would be bruises later.

"Watch it Potter." Piers Polkiss sneered. "You should know better than to get in Dud's way."

"Yeah, watch it freak." Dudley jibed, and the rest of his crew laughed. They hurried off, as the janitor came around the corner of the hall pushing a mop.

"Come on, we'll be late for the bus." Dudley said, as they ran off.

Harry sighed with relief, but panic took him as he realized that he would be late for the bus. He winced slightly, as he scampered up quickly and began collecting his belongings. His knees and hands still ached from being pushed to the ground with so much force. Dudley had rammed him from behind with all the physical strength he had. Sometimes he really, really hated his cousin.

As soon as he got everything, he rushed out to the front of the school, only to see that the busses were already gone. He didn't know what to do now, his Aunt and Uncle would not be pleased at all. They would be even more displeased, if the school had to call and tell them to come get him. He may only be seven, but he knew that his relatives hated him as much as he hated them. He knew that any trouble he caused them would result in punishment and time locked under the stairs with no food. He had only gotten back to getting normal, or what could be considered normal for him anyway, meals a few days ago. He wasn't about to give that up by being a huge problem for them. Maybe he could walk home. He knew the route by heart. The only problem was he didn't know how far it was.

With a tired sigh for what he was about to do, he began the long walk home. He took the road west and followed it a few blocks, until he recognized the gas station and turned right to follow another road north. He walked along that road for a long time, before recognizing the crazy decorated lawn of the blue house and took the left a few blocks down. He followed that road, until he recognized the next spot to turn and took off in a northern direction once again. He was beginning to get tired of walking and his knees really hurt. He could see the sun getting lower in the sky with each step he took.

He really wished his parents hadn't die in a car crash. He wished that his mother didn't have such horrible people for relatives. He wished that some other long lost relative would remember him and take him away. He had been hoping the same thing for years, but no one ever came. He knew that they never would. He would remain with the Dursley's no matter how much they didn't like each other. There was nothing he could do about it now. He was stuck with them and them with him. He kicked at a rock that was on the sidewalk violently and sent it flying. The crash he heard stopped him.

When he looked up, fear settled in his stomach. A silver car had pulled over to the side of the road. The entire front windshield cracked. He knew he didn't kick the rock that hard, but odd stuff like this always happened to him. He took off running, as the man began to get out of his car. He knew he was toast, if the Dursley's found out about it.

"Get back here!" The man yelled.

Harry looked back to see the man chasing him. He was in a business suit, and his face was the shade of his Uncle Vernon's, when he was really angry. Harry dove under a shrub and crawled into the front yard of one of the houses. He quickly ran to the backyard and climbed the fence to the next lot. He exited through their front yard and continued running. He ran up to a crossing alley and took it to the next street. Putting even more distance between him and the angry man. He continued to run, letting his legs carry him in the same manner he did, when Dudley's gang chased him. When he was sure that he was safe and could run no longer, he slowed to a walk once again.

It was then that he realized he had a problem. He had no clue where he was. Looking around he noticed that he was in a neighborhood area, but he didn't recognize it at all. He knew he was really going to be in for it now. He had missed the bus, broke some guys car, got lost, and now they would have to come get him from wherever he was. He was in so much trouble. Uncle Vernon was sure to kill him this time. He began to tremble at that thought. He did not want to go back there. He couldn't go back. He just couldn't. He needed to go someplace else.

Panic filled him. There was nowhere else for him to go. That was why he ended up with the Dursley's in the first place. Regardless, he

just knew that he couldn't go back. He saw the lunches the other kids got. He helped cook the meals Dudley ate. He knew how he was treated by the Dursley's wasn't normal or right. The other kids his age weren't as short as he was. They didn't wear long sleeves on sunny days to hide the bruises. Dudley didn't sleep in a cupboard. He had a whole big room to sleep in and another one for his toys. The other kids didn't have to fear for their lives every time the final bell rang at school. Instead, they celebrated the end of the day and ran excitedly to the busses. The Dursley's claimed that he deserved everything he got because he was a freak. Maybe they were right, but Harry still didn't want to go back. He wanted what all the other kids had. He wanted to stop being afraid. He wanted to stop feeling the all pain. He wasn't going back. He refused to go back.

Shivering from the on setting evening cold, he un-wrapped his too big and worn jumper from around his waist. He set his book-bag on the ground and put on the jumper. He slung his bag over his should again, only to feel its weight. He scowled down at it. If he wasn't going back to the Dursley's, then he wouldn't be going back to Crescent Primary School either. He wouldn't need the stupid, heavy, and falling apart bag. He set it back down on the ground and dug through it. There was nothing of value in it, only old pencils Dudley refused to use, a workbook for math, and another workbook for writing. He looked around and saw a garbage bin at the end of one of the driveways. He quickly raced over to it and threw the stupid bag in it. He was done with his life at the Dursley's.

He felt proud at deciding to be rid of the foul people he was forced to call family. A few seconds later fear set in once again. What was he supposed to do now? He knew the Dursley's wouldn't worry that he was gone. In fact, they would probably be happy and throw a party to celebrate. He looked up and down the street he was on. No one seemed to notice him or care. They were all wrapped up in their own lives. He decided to keep walking. To where? He did not know. He did know that he wanted to get as far away from the Dursley's as possible.

The walk was long, and his legs ached. His stomach ached as well, but he ignored it. He was used to that kind of pain. He didn't know where he was, but he knew he was a ways away from the Dursley's now. It was starting to get dark, which meant that it was around 8:00, as the sun set around then in the middle of May, or so the telly told

him. Harry yawned tiredly. It was already a half-hour past his usual bedtime.

Looking around, he noticed that he was in a slightly poor neighborhood. The houses weren't super nice, and the lawns unkempt. He noticed that one of the houses had what looked to be an old, broken down car pulled to the side of the drive. If it was unlocked, it would be a good place for him to rest. He snuck over to it, trying to be unnoticed. As he got closer, he noticed that the old, green car was really rusted out in some spots. It was so bad in places, that there were holes in the metal. He tried the back passenger-side door and happily found it open. He climbed in and wrinkled his nose, as the smell of mildew assaulted him. He looked around and found there was nothing valuable in the car, not even a stereo. He laid down on the soft backseat and curled into a ball, so that Dudley's old sweater could cover all of him. He was so exhausted that he fell right to sleep.

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The next day he woke up hot, as the sun pounded through the car windows heating the air inside. He climbed out groggily and breathed in the considerably cooler morning air with appreciation. He wandered back to the street and sat down on the curb. He didn't know where to go or what to do. He was hungry and sore. He still did not want to go back to the Dursley's. He just couldn't figure out what to do now.

He pulled his knees up and rested his head on them. Maybe he could find an orphanage. They took in kids like him. How was he supposed to get to one, though? He didn't think there were any orphanages in Surrey. He teased his lower lip in worry, as he continued to contemplate his situation. No matter how he looked at it, it didn't look good. Going back to the Dursley's was out of the question. Finding an orphanage on his own didn't seem possible. Talking to an adult about it all was just too much of a risk.

"Hey, kid." A stranger called from behind him. That wasn't good.

Harry jumped up and was ready to run, but the stranger caught his arm. He turned to see it was a police officer. The man's car was parked on the side of the road a little ways away. That was even worse.

"I just want a quick word." The officer said reassuringly. "If I let go, promise not to run?"

Harry nodded slowly, as fear settled in his stomach. As soon as the man did let go, he took off as fast as he could go. The officer chased after him. He ran down the street and then cut down an alley to cross to the next street. However, he found it fenced off. He glanced back to see the officer gaining on him. He ran at the fence and jumped to get as high as possible, so he could climb over it. He couldn't be caught. He knew the police would send him back for sure, and he was not going back.

He quickly clambered over the fence, just before the officer came running up to it. He took off running once again. The officer said something, but he ignored it and kept running. When he got to the end of the alley, another police man was waiting. The car was parked behind him.

"Whoa, easy, kid." The man said softly. "We aren't going to hurt you. We just need to talk to you."

Harry took a step back, seeing that there was no way of getting around the officer. The alley was too narrow, especially with the car helping to block it off. The man would catch him for sure. When he looked behind him, he saw the other police officer approaching him. He was screwed. They were going to catch him. He would have to go back to the Dursley's.

"Stop!" Harry yelled at the men advancing on him. Both stopped instantly.

"Okay." The one behind him said and held up his hands in surrender. "We won't come any closer. What's your name?"

Harry bit his tongue. He wasn't that stupid. His name was a one way ticket back to the fat whale, his giraffe wife, and his pig son.

"Why aren't you in school?" The other tried. "Boys your age should be in school this time of day."

Harry remained silent. He had to get away from them. He couldn't go back to the Dursley's. He watched the two, as they seemed to

silently communicate something between them. The next thing he knew he was rushed from both sides and one of them had a hold of him. He began to panic. They had caught him. He was going back. Uncle Vernon was going to kill him. He knew he would do it this time. He had caused too much trouble.

"Let me go!" Harry protested fearfully, kicking and squirming as much as possible. "Put me down! Let me go!"

Suddenly, there was a loud crash of exploding glass, and the officer dropped him with a yelp of pain. Harry stared in awe, as the police car was engulfed in flames. He turned to see the officer staring at his hands. Both were red and looked like they had been burned. The second officer was in shock, until Harry took off running back up the alley.

"Stop where you are." The officer ordered and lunged at him, trying to prevent his escape.

Harry dove to the side and landed roughly on the ground. The officer was towering over him, when there was a loud 'pop'. Harry recognized the sound as gun fire, like on the television shows his Uncle would watch. He closed his eyes and curled up protectively. There were several more pops. He desperately hoped the bullets missed him. He looked up, when he heard two thuds that sounded like someone falling to the ground and several people talking.

"Hey there, little one." A friendly looking woman, who was dressed in a deep blue gown, said gently. She was approaching him slowly in a cautious manner.

Harry looked around and saw that there were four other men, who were also dressed in deep blue gowns. His eyes went wide at seeing them put out the flames engulfing the car with water that came streaming out of the sticks they were holding. He wondered where they were getting the water from.

"It's magic." The woman said when she noticed his curious gaze. By this time, she was fairly close to him and had squatted down in a nonthreatening manner. She had left a few feet between them. "Do you know about magic?"

"Magic isn't real." Harry said in disbelief. The Dursley's had always told him magic wasn't real, that it was nonsense.

"Magic is very real. How else did you blow up the car?" She asked kindly, while noting that he still seemed scared. He had already blown up a car, so there was no telling what his magic would do, if he felt threatened once again.

"I-I did that?" Harry asked in a horrified whisper. "I hurt that mans hands!"

"Shhh, it's okay." She said, trying to calm him. "He'll be fine, everything will be fine. It's not your fault. Every magical child has bouts of accidental magic. My friends and I are Aurors. We are like the muggle police. We fix these types of situations. Everything will be fine, I promise."

"Muggle?" Harry asked confused and scooted farther away. He didn't want anything to do with any sort of police.

"You are a wizard young man." She said with a gentle smile. "That means you are magical and a part of the magical world. The muggles, which is what we call people who aren't magical, don't know about magic or our world."

"I-I'm a-a wizard?" Harry asked with huge eyes. He had read a book about wizards. After he had done exceptionally well on one of his reading tests, his teacher had let him pick out one of the children's chapter books to read during his free time in class. He thought he remembered one of the wizards being named Merlin and a witch named Morgan le Fay.

"Yup." She nodded. "Can you tell me your name?"

He inched further away and remained silent.

She sighed, as she noted his skittish behavior. Her eyes roamed over him objectively, studying his too big and worn out clothes, his knotted hair, and his taped up glasses. A frown crossed her face.

"Do you have a home?" She asked him. He shook his head. He didn't have one as far as he was concerned. "Jonas, we're going to have to bring him to HQ. We've got a code 497 here."

The man, who must have been in charge and named Jonas, turned to her. He had graying hair and a piece of his ear was missing. Harry thought he looked fairly scary. The man looked at him with sadness, before anger flashed in his eyes.

"Blasted muggles." He growled. "Mistreating a magical child. They'll be paying for that. Take him now. Get him something to eat. He looks like he's about to starve to death."

"I'm Auror Vice. I'm going to take you some place safe, where we can get you some food and better clothes." She said, while holding out her hand to him. Harry hesitantly stood up and took it, knowing there wasn't any other option really. They'd catch him, if he tried to run. Besides, he had nowhere else to go. He just hoped they didn't send him back.

"I'll take him." A brown haired man volunteered quickly.

"Vice has it, West." Jonas barked. "We need to get the muggles around here obliviated."

"Vice is new. It would be best, if someone who knows procedure takes care of this." West said, staring at Harry.

"I'm sure she can handle it. He is just a kid." Jonas dismissed.

"Just a kid? Jonas that kid is powerful." West said back with a pointed tone. "When was the last time accidental magic has gotten so out of control and violent that our department was brought in to deal with it? This isn't a normal case. The Department of Magical Accidents and Catastrophes reported this as being off their charts for accidental magic. I'm telling you. This needs to be handled by someone with experience. Plus, Vice should get some more practice at handling terrified muggles."

"Fine, Vice, stay and help obliviate. West, take him in. You're the one who wanted take this assignment to begin with. I suppose you can go play babysitter, if you really want to." Jonas ordered, clearly frustrated.

The brown haired man smiled. There was a hidden glint in his hazel eyes that seemed almost victorious. He walked over to where Harry was standing next to Auror Vice.

"This is Auror West. He'll take good care of you, okay?" Auror Vice asked. Harry nodded and let her drop his hand. She gave him a smile and then left to go help the other Aurors.

"Hello, Harry Potter." Auror West greeted, as he squatted down closer to his level. Harry's eyes went wide. "So, they put you with muggles. Obviously, not with the good sort either."

"How do you know who I am?" Harry asked nervously, while taking a step back.

"You have James Potter written all over you, son. Those eyes of yours scream Lily Potter. There was no doubt in my mind about who you are." The Auror told him gently. "Let's not tell the others though. You're kind of a big deal in our world."

"M-my parents were magical?" Harry asked interested. He was never told much about them. The Dursley only told him they died in a car crash, and that his dad was an unemployed drunk.

"Oh yeah, they were the best. Both were powerful. You'll be very powerful, when you get older." West smiled. "Come on, I have somebody you need to meet. I can't have the Ministry, Dumbledore, or any 'innocent' Death Eaters getting their hands on you, kid."

"Huh? What did you mean I'm a big deal? What are Dumbledore and Death Eaters?" Harry asked confused and slightly afraid. Whatever a Death Eater was, it didn't sound good.

"It will all be explained. Just take my hand." West said with an encouraging smile, as he held out his hand. Harry hesitantly took it. A second later he felt like he was being squeezed to death and then suddenly his feet were back on solid ground.

Harry gasped, when he looked around him. They were no longer in the alley, but instead in a grand entrance hall. The place seemed to be built out of pure black and grey marble. He looked down and found himself standing on the center of a giant shield that was part of the black marble floor. The shield was a blood red, and there was

a scary looking black dragon on it. There were swords that crossed behind it, and a face mask, like the ones of old knight's armor, sitting at the top. The word 'Knight' was written in red across an outlined black ribbon at the bottom of the shield, while something in a language he didn't understand was written across a ribbon at the top. This place was nothing like how he envisioned a police station to be.

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HARRY POTTER MISSING! May 19th, 1988

by Jena Pokips

Early yesterday evening, Albus Dumbledore, along with Minister Bagnold, announced that the Boy-Who-Lived is missing. Though the location of the boy's residence was not revealed, we were informed that he has been staying with his muggle relatives for the last six and a half years. It appears that the boy did not return home from school the day before last. When he didn't arrive directly home from school, the muggles said that they just assumed the boy went to the play park like he did sometimes. However, they grew worried, when the boy didn't come home before sun down.

His relatives say that little Harry Potter is a very quiet and independent boy. That he has been prone to disappear for a few hours every now and then. They weren't overly concerned, until they woke up yesterday morning to find that the boy still had not returned. They were about to contact the authorities, when Albus Dumbledore arrived to check up on the child. The Headmaster of Hogwarts has personally been monitoring the property since Harry Potter's placement there, after James and Lily Potter's deaths. To ensure our young hero's safety, he had set up wards over the house. Yesterday morning, the wards signaled the boy's absence for the last 24 hours.

With the help of the boy's loving Aunt and Uncle, Headmaster Dumbledore was able to determine that the boy went missing somewhere between the time he left to get on the school bus with his cousin last Thursday morning and around 4:00 in the afternoon that same day. When he went to talk to the primary school that young Mr. Potter was attending, they reported that he never got on the afternoon bus, but he was in class that day. A thorough sweep was conducted of the area around the school. There was no magical residue to be found.

It is now assumed that the boy was lured away from the school, before he could get on the bus. Whether his abductor is magical or muggle is unknown. What is known is that magical methods were not used in abducting the child. He was either taken by physical force, or he went willingly. The Minister assured that she has the best working on finding the boy we owe so much to. A full scale investigation has been launched. Anyone with any information is encouraged to report it to the Ministry right away. There is a 2,000 galleon reward for any information that may lead to finding our young savior.

Harry Potter, wherever you are, know that you are in our hearts and we hope to bring you home soon.

The aged wizard set the Daily Prophet down on his desk with a weary sigh. He gently rubbed his temples with his wrinkled hands, trying to force his building headache to stay at bay. He had spent most of the previous day searching for Harry Potter. He knew it was a pointless endeavor. He had known that it would be the second he was signaled that the blood wards come crashing down. There were only two reasons for it. One, the boy was dead. Or two, the boy no longer called the place home and had found 'home' in some other place.

The last option, he hoped desperately was the case. Harry Potter could not be dead. The boy would be needed, when Voldemort managed to rise again. Without him, they were doomed. Voldemort had chose Harry. He had marked him. However, doubts plagued him about the boy still being alive. He had placed several strong tracking charms on the child, when he left him with the Dursley's six and a half years ago. All of them had been removed, which was something only a powerful adult wizard could do.

It was glaringly apparent that someone magical had gotten their hands on the child. No one on the light side would take the boy or would even have cause to track him down to his muggle primary school. The only reason why anyone with good intentions would come in contact with him would be in a case of accidental magic, and the Accidental Magic Reversal Squad was dispatched to take care of fixing the situation. However, there was no case of accidental magic reported in the Surrey area for the last two months. It had been one of the first things he checked.

The old wizard sighed and deep remorse filled his eyes. The boy was dead. He knew he couldn't keep denying it. Only a dark wizard would track him down. Only a dark wizard would take him and let the world believe he was missing. Only the boy's death or finding a new place to call home would cancel the wards, and no follower of Voldemort was about to give the boy a home. Harry Potter was dead. He had thought that the Prophecy and the blood wards would protect the boy, but obviously he was wrong.

Thinking of the Prophecy sent pain through his old heart. So many in the war with Voldemort had died, years he and others had fought, and over those years optimism that they would actually win dwindled. The Prophecy was a new hope, when he heard it, but it was also the damning of an innocent soul. A baby, one born at the end of July, would have the power to defeat the Dark Lord Voldemort. He had done his best to protect the Potters and the Longbottoms, yet it wasn't enough. Both families suffered. Thanks to Lily Potter, Voldemort was cast out of his body, giving them a short reprieve and leaving Harry Potter as being the child of the Prophecy.

However, now...now the boy was dead. The Prophecy had stated that 'either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives'. Obviously, he had missed something. The Prophecy should have protected Harry. His death should have come about by Voldemort's hand, if he were to die at all. Yet...it was obvious that the child was now dead, and he knew that Voldemort had not yet risen again. Unless...yes...unless...there was only one thing to do now.

He got up from his winged back armchair and crossed his circular office to his fireplace. He threw some floo powder on the flames.

"Longbottom Manor." He called once his head was in the emerald fire.

"Albus?" A concerned old woman asked with slight alarmed.

"May I come through, Augusta? This is about Neville's future." Albus said gravely, looking up at her from inside her fireplace.

"The Potter boy's dead, isn't he?" She asked, looking as if her whole world was crashing down around her. Albus could see the Daily Prophet resting on the table next to the armchair she sat in.

"I'm sorry, but I'm afraid so." Albus nodded solemnly. "I wish I could say that he is not, but everything points to the boy's death. If I may come through, I shall explain, and we can discuss how best to proceed. Neville is now the child of the prophecy. He is our only hope for when Voldemort returns."

"Neville is just a boy, Albus." Augusta protested with sadness in her eyes.

"I understand that my dear, but the public needs a savior. Moral will fall with the announcement of Harry Potter's death, and they will need a light in the darkness." Dumbledore said with matching sadness. "I have always wished that this did not have to fall to a child, but at last it does. May I come through?"

"Yes, I suppose so." Augusta sighed. A few seconds later Albus Dumbledore sat across from her looking grave.

"We will need to make him strong." Albus said to the worried grandmother.

She sat quietly for a few minutes, as she took in what exactly this meant for Neville. A determined look crossed her face. "He is Frank's son, my grandson. He will be strong. He will destroy that evil man, when he returns to the land of the living. We'll start training him up, and when the time comes, Voldemort won't know what hit him."

"I don't want to take away his childhood, Augusta. Let him be a happy, carefree child while he can. We can wait to train him, until the time is right. He shouldn't have this weight on his shoulder, not until he is ready." Albus told her solemnly.

"What do you suggest? Let him stumble through life and then drop this on him?" Augusta demanded.

"No, I suggest we turn the public's eye on him now. Get him used to the attention, and used to the weight of having people looking at him as a beacon of light. Give him confidence, by giving him hardship to work through and overcome. Help him become as determined and

brave as his father was." Albus explained. "Slowly, he can have this weight place on him. To tell him now and to train him now, would only hurt him."

"I see your point. We must do what is best for Neville." Augusta agreed.

"Then there is much that needs to be discussed." Albus told her with a heavy tone. "I thought that Harry Potter was marked, but I no longer think the mark is something physical. I think it is more of who Voldemort sees as being a threat to him. Neither boy was marked, as he was cast out of his body, before he could truly begin to consider either one as being a danger to him. With Harry gone now, Neville will be the one. Voldemort will see him as being the one with the power to destroy him, making Neville his equal. For the good of the wizarding world, Neville cannot fail in his task. It is up to us to prepare him. He will need to be strong and confident. He will need to be graceful and caring. He must know the proper way to act, as well as the proper way to wield a wand. He will be the representation of light, as Tom is the representation of dark."

Hello my readers, now I ask you very kindly to review. I know, I know...you really don't want to, but I must tell you that reviews are very much appreciated. They help authors a lot. Even if it is a simple 'I liked this' or 'I thought this sucked'. The writers on this site want to improve their writing, and the reviewers are the ones who help them improve by telling them they are doing well, they have a bad idea, or pointing out grammatical and spelling flaws. So, please hit the button below and help me out on becoming a better writer. I'll give recognition and thanks to those who do review in future chapters.

Becoming Knight – September 1988

A young boy, with chin length, jet black hair and blue eyes, carefully snuck down the black marble staircase. He made sure to move without sound across the dark entrance hall, his tan bare feet padding over a giant depiction of a red shield with a black dragon on it. He peaked into the grand dining room, only to see his target was not there. Confused, he was about to turn around, when strong hands grabbed him and picked him up from behind.

"Eek!" The boy exclaimed in surprise, as his feet left the dark marble floor.

"Got'cha." A man said, as he turned the boy in his arms and placed him on his hip.

"Not fair." The boy protested, as he looked up into the face of a man with cold midnight blue eyes and strong, handsome, angular features. The man's shoulder length, black hair that framed his face brushed his cheek lightly, as he turned his head to get a better look at the pajama clad boy now in his arms. For a fraction of a second, his eyes softened at the boy's pout.

"You did well this time, son. I wouldn't have known you were even approaching, if I wasn't late to breakfast." The man told the boy and ruffled his hair teasingly.

The boy smiled brightly at the praise, while swatting the hand away. The man just looked amused and carried him into the grand dining room. The candles in the room lit up at their entrance. The flames danced and reflected off of the dark marble walls and floor. The man approached the long alabaster stone table and set the boy down in a chair that was to the right of the Head Chair. He then took his place at the head of the table.

As soon as he was seated, their breakfast was set. Each had a bowl of porridge, along with a small bowl of fruit off to the side. The boy had a glass of milk, a glass of water, and two potions vials set out for him to drink. One of the potions vials was filled with a blue liquid and the other with an orange liquid. The man had a cup of tea, a glass of water, and a potions vial with orange liquid sitting out in front of him.

"Sit up straight, Blake." The man said, when he noticed the boy slouching.

"Sorry, Daddy. I forgot." The boy said and straightened his back.

The meal continued on in the same manner. The man's eyes carefully watched his son. He immediately corrected him on anything from posture to the way he held his spoon. Blake seemed slightly annoyed, but did as his father instructed him to do. Once Blake had eaten all of his porridge and fruit, as well as drank all of his milk and water, he grimaced at the prospect of taking the potions.

"Take them." His father instructed, as he lifted his own orange vial to his lips.

Blake took the nasty blue one first. It was a nutrient potion that he had taken every day for the last four months. He then took the orange one, which tasted only slightly better. It was a vitalizing potion. It had vitamins, minerals, and basically anything good for the human body in it. It was packed full of healing herbs that would heal the drinker of any cold or minor injury, as well as make sure that their body was functioning at its best. Blake felt a rush of energy and his sore muscles stopped hurting.

"Alright, come on." His father said, standing up. Blake got out of his chair and was about to race out of the room to get dressed, when his father picked him up.

"Noooo!" Blake protest and tried to squirm out of his father's arms. He knew what this meant. His father only picked him up, before he could run off, when it was one of those days.

"You know it does you no good to fight me." His father said sternly and carried him into the entrance hall, where he took the stairs to the next floor. They walked down the hall, until the man opened an ebony door with much difficulty, as his son squirmed in his arms. The room they entered had several shelves that were lined with various books concerning the topic of potions and many jars that were labeled with names such as 'belladonna' and 'eye of newt'. There was a long workbench in the center of the room. It was cleaned off for the most part, but several caldrons were stacked underneath.

The man wrestled Blake over to sit on the workbench. He placed a warming charm on the cold surface, before setting Blake down. He held the struggling boy in place with his hands, as well as a very stern look. After a minute, Blake stopped fighting against him and sat still.

"You know I will find you, if you run. Let's just get this over with." The man said seriously.

Blake nodded with tears forming in his eyes. The man bent down and lovingly kissed his son's forehead.

"I know it hurts, and you don't like it, but you'll thank me, when you're older. For now, I'm sorry, but it's been a month. Actually, it's been a month and a week. I postponed it as long as I could. I can tell they are bothering you again. After this, there are only two more treatments." The man said quietly, as he looked into the young and upset face of the boy in front of him.

"It hurts so badly." Blake whimpered.

"I know, Blake. Like I told you before, my father gave me the same treatment, when I was your age. His father did the same for him and so on. Every young heir to the Knight family has had the same treatment given to them since it was discovered." The man said reassuringly.

Blake sniffed, but seemed to prepare himself for what he knew was coming. The man nodded his approval and walked to a dark wood cabinet. There were several full potion vials protected within it. He grabbed a vial that had a silky looking black substance in it and then grabbed one that had a vile looking red liquid in it. He sighed and discreetly put the red one in his dark maroon robes. He shut and warded the cabinet once again, before crossing back over to his son.

"Okay, you know the drill." The man said and gave Blake the open vial of black liquid.

Blake made an unwilling face and then downed the potion in one shot, as he had been instructed to do in the past. He looked to his father, keeping his eyes wide open, even as they began to burn. His father spelled his eyes to remain that way. He then pointed his wand directly at Blake's right eye and began a long Latin phrase. Once he

was done, he did the same to Blake's left eye. He looked at Blake's eyes closely and watched as his son's blue irises darken to a midnight blue so similar to his own. Blake just sat ridged, trying hard not to scream, as his eyes felt like they were on fire. His father put his hands over his smaller ones, which were gripping the table so tightly that his knuckles had gone white. His father rubbed soothing circles with his thumbs over the back of his palms. Eventually, his grip loosened and he began to relax. He nodded at his father's questioning look. The man quickly released the charm he had placed on his eyes in order to keep them open. Blake looked around surprised and blinked a few times.

"I can read the label on the moonstone all the way over there this time." Blake said, as he looked 20 ft to the end of the room, where the word 'moonstone' was written on one of the jars in small script.

"Good. I'm so proud of you. You did really well." The man said and hugged Blake to him. He released him and then gave him a very serious look, as he took the red potion out of his pocket. He held it up, so Blake could see it. "I need you to be brave one more time for me, Blake."

"W-what is it?" Blake asked looking at the potion cautiously.

The man reached out and gently traced the lightning bolt scar on Blake's forehead. "It will make it go away. I'm positive that it will work, but I don't know, if it will hurt or what it will do as a side effect. I promise that nothing in this potion will harm you permanently."

Blake reached up and touched his scar. It was the only scar left on his body. He knew what it was from. He had gotten the scar, when an evil man, by the name of Lord Voldemort, tried to murder him after murdering his birth parents, James and Lily Potter. The man sent the killing curse at him, but something went wrong. Instead of killing him, it ended up turning on its caster and blasting the evil man's soul out of his body. The scar wouldn't heal, no matter what his blood adoptive father, Tomas Isaiah Knight, had done to it. He told Blake that it had a darkness in it that wouldn't let the healing magics work properly. He promised him that he would find something that would make it go away. That had been four months ago, and Blake had been waiting eagerly ever since. He hated the scar. It was part of that horrible night, one he still had nightmares about every once in a while.

With barely any hesitation, he took the vial from his father's hands. He saw surprise on his father's face, as he had taken it from him before he could even uncork it. He pulled out the cork and downed the potion. He couldn't wait to get rid of the scar. Not only was it a reminder, it was also the last piece of Harry James Potter: the boy who was famous for surviving the killing curse. The boy who was a beacon of light and hope to those, who let fear rule them. Harry James Potter was the boy who many would try to use in order to better themselves. But most importantly, he was the boy Voldemort would want dead as soon as he gained his body back. Personally, Blake didn't want any part of it.

His father had explained everything to him the first day they met, when Nick West had brought him to him. He had bathed him, fed him, and then healed him. Once he took care of his physical needs, he had sat him down and told him the truth about the magical world, about his parents, and about who exactly Harry James Potter was to the wizarding community. Needless to say, he was shocked, upset, and angry about being lied to for six years of his life. He told his father that he wanted absolutely nothing to do with all that came with being the Boy-Who-Lived. His father had just grinned at him with delight. He then told him exactly why he was brought to him.

His father explained that he, Tomas Knight, was a recluse. His family had estranged from society, after the formation of the Ministry of Magic. Back when they took a more active role in society, they held a lot of power, were extremely well respected, and were leaders in the ending of the witch hunts. His father didn't explain fully, but basically the Knight family willing fell into the background. After so many years, the Knight name was believed to be a bloodline of the past, a name that had long died out. Something that his father admitted was actually close to the truth. He was the end of his family line, the last official Knight. His parents only wanted a son and he was their first born.

At the time of his birth, things were getting dangerous and his parent knew having children was not a good idea. They only had one son, so they could ensure that the family name would continue on, in case if they became casualties of what they knew was a brewing war. If the war turned sour, they didn't want to bring extra life into a world filled with such horror. They were good fighters, and in late April of 1978, they were doing something that was instrumental in

the fight against Voldemort. He had caught wind of it and personally murdered them. That was a decade ago, and his father was only 16 at the time. Nick was a good friend of his father's parents and took his father under his wing after their deaths. It was now his father's responsibility to see that the Knight name continued on. It was his responsibility to make sure that there was someone to take up the honor of the Knight family, an honor that had been passed down from father to son since they left society all those centuries ago.

His father informed him that Voldemort was not gone and that he would be back. The only question was 'how soon?' and there was plain and simply no 'if' about it. He knew a storm was brewing and right now, and for years to come, his focus would not be on finding the love of his life and having children. However, he wanted to be sure the family name continued, in case if he became a casualty in the coming war. He needed a son, someone to take his name and someone he could train, so that they could fulfill the honor of the Knight family. He wanted to give a gifted and powerful child his title, his fortune, and his family's legend. His father explained that Nick and some others knew of this. Nick brought him here, so he could be given the option of calling him 'Father' and having a better life than what was originally offered to him.

He was hesitant at first. The thought of his parent held him back, but ultimately he realized he didn't know his parents. In fact, all he had of them were memories of their murders and his mum's sister, who he really didn't like. He didn't have family or anyone that wanted him, which was why he ended up with the stupid Dursley's. He told this to his father. What the man had said to him in response made up his mind.

His parents loved him, they died to protect him, and they would want him to be happy. They wouldn't care if he took the offer. They wouldn't care if he moved on with his life and tried to find family with others. They wanted what would be best for him, and what would bring a smile to his face. His father promised that he would make sure that he never went hungry, that he never wanted for something as basic as clothing that fit. He said if he took the offer, he would treat him as if he were truly his own. He said that if it was okay with him, he would make him his, not only legally by adoption, but by blood and magic as well. He wanted to be his father, to teach him, to guide him, and most importantly to love him. He wanted a son and to have him as his son would be an honor.

That night Nick came back and over saw Harry James Potter's adoption by blood and magic to Tomas Isaiah Knight. His father rechristened him with the name they agreed upon, Blake Alexander Knight, and sealed the adoption by cutting their palms and pressing them together. Nick said some kind of spell, and his father's blood and magic pushed its way into him. He had felt himself changing physically, as his father's blood and magic demanded he truly became a Knight.

With a flash of blinding red light, all wards around the Dursley's household fell, the name Harry James Potter disappeared from the Hogwarts Book, and the goblins were alerted to Harry James Potter's change in status to Blake Alexander Knight. Harry James Potter's trust and the Potter vault were instantly emptied of all the currency in them, as commanded by the will of James and Lily Potter. It was moved to a new vault under the name of Blake Alexander Knight. A money transfer of 2,000 galleons a year would go to the Knight's vault. Upon reaching the age of majority, full access to the new vault would be granted to the vault holder, Blake Alexander Knight. Within an hour, the Potter vault sealed, as it recognized no Lord or Heir existed. The Potter properties and possessions were safe, until Blake Alexander Knight reclaimed his rightful title as Heir and future Lord of the Potter bloodline. Or until Blake Alexander Knight died and someone of Potter blood claimed the rights.

His father was sent a detailed letter from the goblins that informed him of all this only a few hours after the adoption occurred. The letter explained that James and Lily had foreseen a case, where Harry might do a blood adoption for his own protection or to truly become part of a new family. They wanted Harry to be well taken care of, and they wanted to ensure that he was financially comfortable in his youth as well as his adulthood. The Potter's had not known what would happen with the war, so they set it up to where their son would always be taken care of.

His father let him read the letter. While he didn't understand a lot of it, he knew then that the choice he made really was something his parents would have wanted for him. In the last four months, he hadn't regretted it once. His new father was good to him. He cared for him just as he promised. He was Tomas Knight's and that was exactly how he wanted it. Harry James Potter was announced dead

three months back and as far as either he or his father were concerned, he was.

He shuddered, as he immediately felt the magic of the potion attack his scar. It felt odd, like the magic was pulling on a part of him. He felt something warm run down his forehead, and he reached up to touch it, but his father caught his hand and shook his head. He smiled at him and got a rare smile in return, as his father held a conjured cloth to his forehead. He felt a sharp pain run through him as it really felt like something was pulling on a part of him now. It was a sickening feeling. Tears formed in his eyes, and he bit his lip to keep from crying. He knew from previous experience with the eye enhancing potion, that if he cried, it would hurt his father deeply. His father didn't like causing him pain and to see it made him feel horrible, or that was what he told him the last time.

His father didn't buy his act, and he found himself scooped up in his father's arms. His father held him tightly and ran a soothing hand up and down his back. Promises that he would be okay were whispered in his ear. He buried his bleeding head in the crook of his father's neck and clung to him, as if the man was a flotation device and he was drowning. Sobs racked his body, as the pain grew, and it hurt all over. Finally, the sharp painful pulling stopped and was replaced by the feeling of something trying to cling to him. He didn't like it. It felt like something was alive in him that wasn't supposed to be there. Whatever it was, he felt it being pushed out to the scar.

"D-daddy" He said shakily and panicked. He was scared, really scared.

"I know kid, you'll be fine, just let the magic do what it is supposed to do." His father instructed calmly.

He shut his eyes tightly and just waited. A few minutes later, he felt as if it was actually being shoved out of his scar. There was a high pitch wail that did not come from him or his father. Then he felt nothing. Whatever it was, it was gone. He felt normal and whole. He opened his eyes cautiously and pulled his head back to look at his father, who was looking beyond relieved. His father shakily raised his wand to his scar. After a few tests, he healed it with a victorious smirk on his face.

"It worked, the scar is gone." Tomas said and conjured a mirror on the bench table. He held it up, so Blake could see.

Blake looked into it. Staring him back in the face was a young boy, one who did not have an ugly scar on his forehead.

"It's gone!" Blake yelled in triumph. He then looked to his father questioningly. "What was that? Why wouldn't it heal?"

"It was a piece of Voldemort's essence or soul." Tomas told him truthfully. His tone was calm and soothing.

"What?" Blake asked in a yelp. "What do you mean a piece of Voldemort?"

"There are a lot of things magic can do, a lot of scary things. One is to split your essence or soul and lock it in an object. It makes it so the soul can't die as long as part of it is bound on earth." Tomas said slowly, so Blake could follow along. "Voldemort did this, many times. My parents were working on locating and destroying the pieces of Voldemort's essence, when they were killed. My guess is, when he tried to kill you, he must have been planning to make another one of these things. The loose soul fragment must have attached to you in the strange events that occurred that night. The potion I gave you was an altered formula of a potion my parents invented. It was originally designed to detach Voldemort's soul pieces from their objects. The magic was designed to attack a soul and rip it out of the vessel that it resided in. I made it, so it attacked your soul and ripped out the piece that was of a dark essence. Do you understand?"

"Um..." Blake said in a state of shock. He followed most of it. Voldemort broke his soul and put it in things to keep from dying. He wanted more things, and the soul piece stuck to him, when he tried to kill him. His father's parents had something to do with it, and they made a potion to get souls out of objects. His father made it, so it took out only the piece of Voldemort's soul. He shuddered, Voldemort was in him. He felt so unclean, and the sick feeling of before returned to him "I-is he d-dead n-n-now?"

"No, I'm afraid not." Tomas sighed and held Blake close. He began walking out of the room, as sobs claimed his little boy's body once again. "Shhh...it's okay. It's gone now, Blake. You're fine. He can't hurt you. I took it out. You're just Blake now and that is it."

Blake nodded, but began to realize how terribly cold he had begun to feel since taking the potion. He shivered violently.

"Blake?" Tomas asked concerned.

"Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!"

"Stand aside, you silly girl...stand aside, now..."

"Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead – "

"Blake?" Tomas asked, shaking him slightly.

"Make them stop, make the voices stop." Blake cried. "He's going to kill her!"

"Not Harry! Please...have mercy...have mercy..."

"Oh, Blake, I'm so sorry." Tomas sighed, as he realized what was going on. He had known that ingesting dementors' blood was risky business. He had tamed the effects of ripping out the soul to only ripping out the parts of a soul that were dark and twisted. He knew that there was nothing he could do for Blake. There were no dementors to scare off with a patronus. The potion would have to fade out of his system, which would take day or so.

Tomas carried his son up to his room and set Blake on his king sized bed. He tucked Blake in under the black satin sheets and laid down next to him. Blake curled into him and clung to him desperately. There was no need for Blake to suffer, so Tomas took a bottle of dreamless sleep out of his bedside drawer. He was about to give it to him, when he remembered the eye enhancing potion. No healing potions were supposed to be mixed with it for an hour or so, after it was taken. He would have to wait a few hours, before he could give Blake the sleeping draught. He pulled his son close and tried to soothe the child the best he could.

I would like to thank those who have review, put my story on their favorites list, community, or alerts list. I love the support, so thank you.

Here are my shout outs of thanks for those who have reviewed so far...

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King; Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed

Now I ask kindly that you hit the button below.

smiles imploringly

Life of a Knight – January 1989

"Again!" A man with midnight blue eyes demanded, as he looked down at a boy, who had eyes that matched his own.

The boy defiantly glared up at him and pushed himself up off the floor. He stood with his weight balanced on his back foot, and his arms held firmly, ready to block or deliver an attack. He watched the man closely, waiting for him to move so much as an inch. The boy sprung forward, when he realized he would have to attack first. He was blocked. He ducked, to miss a hit aimed at him. He then retaliated with a kick. The man caught his foot and pulled his weight right out from under him. The boy landed on the floor once again.

"This isn't fair." The boy growled, as he got up.

"Blake, life is never fair. You won't beat me until you're damn good. You are improving constantly. However, it will be a while, before you'll be able to actually land a hit on me." The man informed him. "Now, again!"

"I think you should pick on someone your own size, Tomas." A voice to their left cut in and disrupted their sparing match.

Both Knights looked to the entrance doors of their gym. A man with brown hair and amused hazel eyes stood in the door frame. A lop sided grin on his face.

"Nick!" Blake yelled and ran over to him. He was enveloped in a hug by the man as soon as he reached him.

"Is he picking on you? Do you want me to beat him up?" Nick asked playfully.

"He made me do ten laps on the track today." Blake pouted.

"You do the Course yet?" Nick asked with a raised eyebrow and shot a look to Tomas.

"No." Blake told him with a hopeful look.

"Go do it, while I talk to your father." Nick instructed with a kind smile, but his eyes were stern.

Blake groaned. He looked to his father and saw no mercy. He felt Nick give him a slight shove to the other side of the room, where the Course was set up.

"Get going, the faster you get it done the faster you can visit." Nick said firmly.

Blake sighed and took off to the other side of the large room. His bare feet pounded against the dark grey marble that had cushioning charms laid over every square inch of it. Even the black marble walls were loaded with cushioning charms. He stopped at the bottom of the Course. The thing was a nightmare, and he hated it. If he fell off of one part, he had to do the whole thing over again.

He stepped up to the simulated rock wall and began the 30 ft climb. The ceiling in the room went up five stories, so there was plenty of room to have a huge jungle gym style obstacle course. He looked over to where his father and Nick stood. He saw his father discretely holding a file and flipping through it. He scowled. That meant his father would be leaving tonight. The last time Nick brought a file to his father; his father had left that night after dinner and said he would be back by sunrise. He told him that he had a business meeting. However, it was more than just a business meeting that his father went to, or so he thought. You don't get a gash on your back that is resistant to magic from sitting around a table and discussing boring adult stuff.

"Get climbing." Nick yelled.

Blake growled and climbed the rest of the way up to the top. He climbed on to a thin platform that was attached to a three inch wide beam. He had to cross it to the other platform, which was a good 20 ft away. The worst part was that there was a strict no running policy. He had to walk across it. When he first started doing this, his father literally pranced across the stupid beam, as if he were walking on a completely stable surface, and told him that he wanted him to be able to do the same. Shakily, he began his long trek across. He was five feet from the end, when he fell. At first the falling scared him, but now that he knew how to land properly he hardly ever got hurt.

With frustration, he climbed the rock wall again, and this time he made it across. The next part was to test muscle control. He had to

pull, push, and squeeze his way across a set of moving platforms and bars. This task he found easy. It just took patience. He grabbed onto a bar and flipped up, so he was sitting on it. He let it swing forward and then grabbed a second bar. He had to pull up on it quickly, before he was left without any support and one of the moving platforms caught him in the shins. He let himself drop to the platform that had cut underneath him. He had to carefully balance on it, so it wouldn't throw him off. He ducked, as another platform swung towards his head. As soon as that danger passed, he grabbed a sliding bar and swung up on it into a handstand, as three platforms cut underneath him. The bar slid closer to the ending platform, and he seized the opportunity. He let his body drop and swung around on the bar. He used the momentum he built to carry him to the ending platform. He landed in a crouch on the balls of his feet.

The next task he hated. He had to use two flat sides a few feet apart to lower himself down to the next platform, where he had to use a rope to cross a 15 ft gap. Once on the other side, he had to climb back up two flat sides similar to the ones he had to climb down. One slip and he was done for and had to do the whole course over again. He was relieved to make it down and across the rope, but going back up he fell. Back to the beginning he went.

He looked over to see Nick and his father watching him. They were both clearly amused. He sent them a glare, before climbing the rock wall again. When he finally made it to the other side of the task that he failed last time, he crawled into the bubble tube, as he called it. It was a large tube full of what looked to be large bubbles, but in reality they were hard as a rock and a pain to get past. This task always changed. There was not one path to figure out. Sighing, he began to slowly move his body through the bubbles, so he could get to the other side. The thing was shaped like a 'U', so he had to climb down and then climb back up. After ten minutes of stretching, scrunching, pushing, pulling, twisting, and sliding, he made it to the final task.

The tube brought him up to the highest point of the course. He looked over the edge of the platform he stood on; 40 ft below there was a 12 ft deep pool. This used to scare him. In fact, a lot of things used to scare him. Blake grinned widely, as he jumped, with both feet together and his arms tuck protectively to his body, over the edge of the platform. He gave a whoop of glee. As soon as he was immersed in the water, he spread his arms and legs out to slow the plunge. He swam up to the surface and then did the required five

laps. Finally, he dragged himself out of the pool and laid down on the cold floor exhausted. He was just glad he only had to do it once a day. He felt a drying charm and a warming charm hit him simultaneously.

"Up you get." Tomas said, pulling him up into standing position.

"Can we eat lunch now?" Blake asked with a whine.

"No whining, it is unbecoming of you." Tomas said, as he motioned for Blake to get walking. "I want you to work on your workbooks after lunch."

"I can't wait for the weekend." Blake mumbled, as he led the group out of the gym and up the stair to the ground level.

"You'll be thanking your father later. I assure you." Nick said pulling on Blake's ponytail.

Blake gave an indignant protest, before taking the band out and combing his hair, so that it framed his face. Tomas flicked his wand at Blake's hair, cleansing it. Blake smiled at his father brightly. Tomas responded by ruffling his hair up, which caused Blake to scowl and fix his hair again.

When they were all seated at the table in the grand dining room, three different meals appeared in front of them. Nick had a steak and kidney pie with a large glass of pumpkin juice. Tomas had a chef salad with a glass of water. Blake had a plate of fresh steamed vegetables and a piece of salmon. He had two glasses, one with water in it and another full of milk. There was a pink potion for him to drink as well. Blake frowned at his plate and scowled menacingly at the potion.

"Eat all of it, Blake." Tomas said sternly. Blake opened his mouth to protest, but Tomas cut him off. "No complaining or you're going back on the nutrient potion."

Blake shut his mouth and cut into a piece of broccoli. He made a face, as he ate it.

"No making faces, young man. It is not fitting for the heir to such a prestigious family to make faces, while he eats." Nick reprimanded.

Blake begrudgingly ate the rest of his food without complaint or making faces. He listened to his father and Nick talk about some guy named Fudge. He didn't think that they liked him very much.

"May I be excused?" Blake asked when he had finished eating all his food and drinking his milk.

His father picked up the potion and held it out to him with a pointed look. Blake sighed and took it, hoping it wouldn't be too nasty. He hated the taste of potions. He looked up to his father for an explanation as to what this one was for. He was always feeding him random potions, though the only one he made him take consistently was the vitalizing potion with his breakfast.

"I have to leave with Nick." Tomas told him. "I'm going to be gone for a few days. I don't want you doing anything in the gym or anything remotely dangerous. With the winter weather, I don't want you outside either. The potion will make sure you don't lose any of your built up strength over the next few days. While I am gone, I want you to work on your workbooks, writing with your left hand, and Occlumency. You are not to go into the potions lab. The house elves will be here with you, so they can get you whatever you need. Okay?"

"Where are you going?" Blake asked quietly. He knew it. He knew that the stupid file meant his father would leave. This time it was for a few days and not just a night. He didn't want him to go.

"A friend of mine got himself in trouble. I promise. I'll be back soon." Tomas told him.

Nick got up and came over to Blake. Blake glared at him. It was Nick, who brought his father the file and making him leave.

"When you're older, you'll understand." Nick sighed and ruffled Blake's hair, instead of giving him the planned hug. "Goodbye, Blake."

Blake remained silent, as Nick left the dining room.

"Come on." Tomas said with a disapproving look and got up from the table.

Blake followed him out to the entrance hall and up the stairs. He ignored Nick, who was waiting there for Tomas. Blake followed his father up to his room. His father walked over to his large bookshelf and grabbed eight workbooks off of it. He then beckoned him over to the desk. Blake sat down, as his father went through his workbooks for Latin, French, Bulgarian, Welsh, Irish, English, Math, and Geography. He marked the pages he wanted Blake to do, while he was gone. Blake just watched with a frown on his face and sadness in his eyes. His father sighed and bent down next to his chair, when he finished.

"I need to go now." Tomas told Blake. He got a glare in return. "Remember I told you that there is an honor passed down to the heirs of the Knight family?"

Blake nodded.

"This is part of that, son." Tomas said seriously. "This friend, he needs help. Help only I can give. Don't be mad at Nick. He is only doing his part. When you're older I'll explain it, but for now I just want you to be a kid. Don't worry about any of this, okay?"

"I don't want you to leave." Blake said quietly and looked at his lap.

"I never wanted my dad to leave either." Tomas said and pulled him into a hug. "He always did, but he always came back."

Blake hugged him back, burrowing his head into his father's chest and breathing in his scent. He didn't want him to go. He didn't want to be lonely again. He was always lonely at the Dursley's.

"I love you, Blake." Tomas said sincerely.

"I love you, too." Blake said sadly.

"Goodbye, my little knight." Tomas said with a reassuring smile, as he set Blake back into the desk chair. He leaned forward to place a kiss on Blake's forehead and then left the room, shutting the door behind him. Blake watched him leave and never once did his father look back.

With a sigh, Blake opened his Latin workbook. He had 12 pages to complete. He would have just as many in all the others. He used to think Mrs. Ramsey's second year class was hard, but he had long realized he had it easy then. He was only expected to do Writing, Reading, Math, Geography, and Art. That was all at the second year level. Since being adopted by his father, he had worked through the rest of his second year and all of the third year level material for English, Math, and Geography. He had completed the level one workbooks for Latin, French, Bulgarian, Welsh, and Irish. He was now starting on new workbooks for those five languages and was working on fourth year level material for the other subjects. However, it was easier to learn now, because the workbooks were enchanted. They were interactive and helped him, when he got stuck. It was like having a private tutor in the subjects he was studying.

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The next few days were miserable for Blake. He missed his father terribly. It was lonely without him. There wasn't anything to do...well there was, but it was no fun without his father. He didn't like playing chess or exploding snaps by himself. He didn't like sneaking through the house, when there was no one to follow or catch him. He didn't really like playing with toys. He never played with any at the Dursley's. He got in trouble if he did. Now, he just didn't see the attraction to them. He preferred to hang around with his father or read about magic. Magic was absolutely fascinating to him, and he wanted to know all about it. However, he wasn't supposed to mess around in the library, when his father wasn't around. Some of the books he wasn't supposed to touch. The elves were no fun either, as they were busy cleaning and cooking. Raphael did play with him a bit. The elf hid, and he had to find him. Raphael was a bad hider, and he found him cleaning the den.

In the end, he decided that he would just do the work he was supposed to do and read one of the books on potions ingredients that he already had in his room. He couldn't wait, until he could brew potions with his father. His father would let him sit on the work bench and watch him, but wouldn't ever allow him to touch anything. He usually told him what everything was and sometimes quizzed him on stuff. Most of the time, he was supposed to work on his workbooks, while his father made the potions.

Without his father around, he took to working on his assignments in his room. He did his work diligently on his workbooks, making sure not to make any mistakes. He copied from *The Tale of the Three Brothers*, as he worked on using his left hand to write. His father wanted him to be able to cast spells from a wand with both hands. He said that writing with his left would help him learn the control necessary for it. The only thing he found that gave him trouble was his Occlumency, as usual. It was the first thing that his father wanted him to learn after adopting him. They had been working on it for eight months now. Blake could easily push thoughts out of his head, so that the only thing in his mind was blank nothingness. His father actually had to work a little in order to pull up his memories.

What he found hardest was the manipulation of memories, which was something his father wanted him to be able to do, before he would let him come in contact with anyone outside of Nick. His father had known Nick since he was ten years old and trusted him explicitly. Nick and his father's parents were very close, even though Nick was eight years their younger. When his father's parents died, Nick was only 29, but he took to looking after their teenage son, as if he were his own. He knew that Nick had become like a second father to his father, and that it didn't matter, if he couldn't hide his mind from him. He knew, just as his father knew, that Nick would never try to enter his mind without permission.

Though he was not a master of keeping people out of his mind yet, his father had already begun to teach him Memory Manipulation. It was usually something an Occlumens learned, after they mastered the art, but His father had a different way of teaching the subjects. A Memory Manipulator would be able to draw a Legilimens in and feed them a false thought or memory. It would seem to the Legilimens that they had complete access to the Occlumens' mind, and they were finding exactly what they were looking for. In truth, the Occlumens would be in complete control, while keeping the true memories secret. Only a very powerful and skilled Legilimens could sense that they were being given a lie, if the Occlumens was a master of the art.

When Occlumency and Memory Manipulation were taught simultaneously, the Occlumens learns to fight a Legilimens, while learning to create and feed a false memory to his attacker. The dual impact on the mind, forces it to learn right from the beginning the

discipline necessary to achieve the desired goal of hiding ones thoughts, while showing a false memory. The difficult, but repeated practice, of the exercise would eventually give way to near flawless false memories, which even the most powerful Legilimens could be fooled with. All heirs to the Knight family were required to master both the skills of Memory Manipulation and Occlumency. When someone looked into the mind of a Knight, it seemed as if they have no grasp on Occlumency at all.

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It was late Thursday night, and Blake sat on his queen sized bed cross legged and with his eyes closed. He was working on 'organizing' the new things he had learned that day in his mind and practicing creating false memories to pair with ones that were of his old life as Harry Potter. It was fun to invent a childhood with Tomas Knight as his father, but exhausting as well.

"Got him!" The heard someone say, startling him out of his concentration. The person scooped him up and then held him upside down by one of his ankles. Blake recognized his father voice. His eyes snapped open, as he was swung upside down. He saw Nick laughing in the doorway to his room. He twisted around, so he could see behind him. He looked up at his father's tired, but amused face.

"DADDY!" He shouted excitedly.

Tomas put him back down on the bed. Blake jumped up and hugged him tightly only seconds later.

"Get in any trouble, while I was gone?" Tomas asked, as he hugged Blake back.

"No, I even did all the work you wanted me to do." Blake said proudly and looked up at his father.

"That's great. I'll check it tomorrow morning." Tomas promised with a smile. "Did you do anything fun while I was away?"

Blake shook his head. "I was sooooo bored. I missed you so much."

"I missed you, too. We'll have to figure out something, so you aren't bored the next time." Tomas told him.

"Okay." Blake said gloomily, as he thought about the prospect of there being a next time.

"Cheer up, I'm home now. We can have lots of fun, alright?" Tomas asked and Blake nodded. "Good, but right now you have something you need to make up for. I want you to go apologize to Nick. I'm sure after two days, you've realized that the way you behaved towards him the last time you saw him was wrong and very rude."

Blake bowed his head in shame and nodded. He did know that. He knew he was being rude, when he did it. Blake let go of his father and walked over to Nick. He felt his father walking behind him. When he was stopped, he felt his father rested a hand on his shoulder, as he stood next to him. Blake could feel both men's eyes burning into him.

"I'm sorry." Blake said looking at the ground.

"That is not an acceptable apology, son." Tomas said in his ear, as he bent down next to him. "Square your shoulders. Look up and meet Nick's eyes. Hold your pride while admitting you did wrong. Never bow your head in submission and mumble out a simple 'I'm sorry'. You are a Knight. You do not bow or submit to anyone. You do not mumble when you speak. You respect those around you, but you do not let them walk all over you. You demand their respect in return. You will recognize the wrong you did in accordance to Nick and apologize for that wrong."

Blake took a deep breath and straightened his shoulders. He looked up and met amused hazel eyes. "I am sorry for my behavior the last time I saw you. I should not have gotten upset with you and behaved so rudely. It is the Knight's honor that sends Daddy away, not you."

"You're forgiven, but don't expect to get away with such tantrums. I don't like disrespect, Blake." Nick said seriously.

Blake went to hang his head, but his father hand was under his chin in a flash to keep him from doing so.

"Don't let him cow you." Tomas said quietly next to his ear. "Head up and give him your word that you will not behave that way again."

Blake took another breath and met Nick's hazel eyes once more. They were stern, but amusement was still hidden in them. "I won't disrespect you again, Nick."

"Next time you do, because you will...kids make mistakes and this won't be the last time you get upset with me and behave rudely. However, the next time I expect an apology without Tomas whispering in your ear." Nick said with a smile.

"Yes, sir." Blake agreed and felt his father stand up beside him.

"Now that we have that settled, time for bed." Tomas said authoritatively.

Blake wanted to stay up and visit, but the look on his father's face told him that going to bed was not up for argument. He quickly gave Nick a hug goodnight, and then his father tucked him in under the red covers of his bed.

"Did you help your friend?" Blake asked quietly.

"Yeah, I helped my friend." Tomas told him and kissed his forehead. "I'll see you in the morning."

"Night." Blake mumbled, as he snuggled into the comfy blankets and heard his father leaving. "Love you."

"I love you, too." Tomas said and then shut the bedroom door.

Thank you all so much. I appreciate all the support you have given me, even though this story is only just getting up off the ground. I promise every review is counted and every review is considered no matter what is said. I also want to thank those of you who are helping to spread my story by adding it to your C2 or your fave list. Thanks for reading and following this story my readers. :)

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But It Is Saturday – July 1989

Blake peaked around the corner into the Knight Family Library. The many crimson wood bookshelves were stocked to the max. There were books on things as basic as house hold charms to the most powerful dark and light magics. He sighed with relief. He didn't see his father anywhere. He thought he would be late, but instead it would be his father who was late. He walked into the room only to be ambushed from the side with a barrage of stinging spells. He ducked and jumped out of the way, dodging them until they stopped. He luckily didn't get hit, but it could be because he had practiced dodging spells every day for the last year or so.

"You're late." Tomas said, as he put his wand away in his navy blue robes and sat down in one of the two arm chairs facing each other. Blake just sat down across from him.

"You said you wanted to see me." Blake said expectantly. Today was Saturday, which meant that it was supposed to be a free day. He still had to run and do the Course, but other than that, he was supposed to have the day to do as he pleased with. However, fifteen minutes ago an elf had come and got him, telling him his father wanted him in the library in ten minutes.

"You are filthy. What have you gotten into?" Tomas asked as he took in Blake's state. There was dirt smudged on his nose, buried under his short finger nails, and stained on the knees of his grey jeans. His hair had bits of moss in it and there was actually a small leaf stuck in the collar of Blake's dark red sweater. He looked down at his son's shoes and shook his head. Mud was caked into the soles of the kid's lace up boots.

"I was in the woods exploring." Blake said happily, his midnight blue eyes shining brightly. "I found a pond, and there were frogs in it."

"Did you have fun?" Tomas asked now seeming amused, instead of annoyed.

"Yeah, I caught one. You want to see it?" Blake asked and began to reach for his right front pocket.

"No!" Tomas said quickly. He rubbed his face with his hands before calling out "Vince."

"Master needs something of Vince?" An elf asked as soon as he popped into the room.

"Blake, give Vince your frog and whatever else you collected today." Tomas instructed sternly.

"I was going to keep him." Blake said down hearted, as he fished a tree frog out of his pocket and gave it to the alarmed elf. He looked back to his father and saw that the man's eyes were narrowed pointedly. "That's all I have, promise."

"Vince, please put the frog back outside." Tomas said to the elf, who was now trying to keep hold of a struggling frog. The elf popped away immediately. Tomas turned his attention back on Blake. "No bring things inside that belong outside."

"He wanted to be my pet." Blake argued.

"Really, how might you know he did?" Tomas asked with an arched eyebrow.

"Well, at first he didn't, and it took me a while to catch him, but when I did, he climbed up the sleeve of my sweater. He wanted to be my pet." Blake explained simply.

"Blake." Tomas sighed exasperated. "He was most likely trying to escape and climbing in your sweater was his only way to freedom. Frogs don't like being pets or being inside. They like to be outside in the pond, okay?"

"Fine." Blake agreed grudgingly.

"Now, I called you up here because I went through your completed workbooks for the last year." Tomas said, as he leaned forward and rested his elbows on his knees. He looked down at Blake seriously. "You did very well with them. I wanted to give you a heads up that this next week you will be taking tests for each subject."

"Teeests." Blake complained.

"Yes, teeests." Tomas imitated. "This next year I want to add on to what you've already learned. You'll be learning parts of muggle

history. Don't give me that look. The muggle world affects ours and it is important that you understand them. The history you will be learning will be the history of their politics and their events that crossed with our world. For example, I want you to understand the Witchcraft Trials from their point of view, so you fully understand why the Statute of Secrecy took effect and the Ministry of Magic formed."

"And why our ancestors did what they did at the time." Blake added in understanding.

His father nodded his approval. "You'll also be learning about their World Wars. Both coincided with the rise of a Dark Lord in our world. In World War II, Grindelwald actually influenced Hitler to make some of the more horrific choices that he made. You need to fully understand the power muggles have. Even without magic, they could easily wipe out the wizarding population."

"I guess it won't be so bad." Blake agreed.

"Glad you think that." Tomas said with a grin. "Now that you have a good grasp on general World Geography, European Geography, and the geography of Britain, I'm going to have you start studying geography with a cultural stand point. You'll begin with the countries, where the languages you are learning are actually spoken."

"Can we go to Ireland, France, and Bulgaria when I get done learning about them?" Blake asked with interest.

"I'll think about it. Your Occlumency needs to be flawless first." Tomas told him. He then turned very serious. "There are two other things I'm going to start teaching you. As my heir you need to learn the Knight history, the Knight political stands, and the Knight financial stands. I will be teaching you these things over the coming years. The second thing I will be teaching you is how to fight with a blade, whether it be sword or dagger."

"When do I get to start studying magic? The only thing you've let me do is Occlumency." Blake asked curiously.

"Good job on hiding your annoyance." Tomas complimented.

Blake shrugged nonchalantly and smiled. It was no secret between him and his father that he was more than a little impatient about learning magic. He was constantly bugging his father about getting a wand and helping him brew potions. He couldn't help it really. He was prone to being curious, even his father admitted he had an unnatural amount of curiosity.

"I let you start on finding your animagus form last month." Tomas pointed out.

"I mean something more than that. And don't even tell me that I have to wait to be strong enough. I levitated a book off my shelf and over to my lap, while I was on my bed the other day. Last year I blew up a police car. I've accidentally grown my hair and accidentally turn my teacher's hair blue. Then there is the fact you've had me practicing Occlumency since I was seven, which even you said was difficult magic to master." Blake said in a rant and crossed his arms, when he finished.

"You levitated a book to you...like you wanted it to come to you?" Tomas asked curiously. Blake nodded. "Was it accidental magic or were you in control?"

"I don't know. I was sitting on my bed just thinking about how tired I was after all that you had me do that day. I didn't want to walk all the way over to the shelf to get a book to read before bed. I read the titles and knew which one I wanted. Then I kind of wished for it to come to me. I felt a sort of energy inside me, and then the book floated over and set down in my lap." Blake explained and fidgeted under Tomas' suddenly intense scrutiny.

"Can you do it again?" Tomas asked after a minute. "Call one of the books to you."

"I don't know how." Blake said with a shrug. "It sort of happened."

"It didn't sort of happen, Blake. You made it happen. You wanted the book and your magic brought it to you. It wasn't sporadic and didn't come in a burst, like accidental magic does." Tomas explained. "The book came, because you used your magic to bring it to you."

"How do I do it again then?" Blake asked with a furrowed brow.

"Find a book on the shelves, and then think about it coming to you. Concentrate hard on pushing your magic out, that energy you felt, and using it to your will. Make it bring you the book." Tomas instructed.

Blake nodded and then scanned the shelves. There was a book on basic Charms theory that took his notice. He concentrated on it and thought about it coming to him. He could feel his magic stir, as he continued to think about wanting the book to come to him. The more he concentrated on trying to push his magic out, the more he could feel it moving within him and out into the room. He sat for he didn't know how long concentrating on the book and his magic. His eyes widen, as the book was pulled off the shelf and then floated over to him. It gently set down in his lap. He looked up to his father with surprise.

"Excellent, Blake." Tomas said. His eyes were alight with pride. "I wasn't able to gain control like that until I was almost eleven. Once you practice enough, it will come easily." He then held out his hand out with the palm up like a table. A book on magical creatures smoothly floated out of its place on one of the shelves closest to them and then landed perfectly in his out stretched hand.

"But you always use a wand." Blake said shocked and confused, as he watched the book come to his father.

"There is noting that can replace a wand. Wands give control, focus, and aim." Tomas said and set the book on the side table next to his chair. He then took out his wand and held it out in front of Blake. "There is a magical core in every wand. The core is attuned to the magical signature of its master. The core calls your magic into it. In nanoseconds it helps to manipulate your magic to your desires, before pushing it out in the form of a spell, charm, or whatever it is that you wish for your magic to become. The words of a spell, whether they are spoken or thought, and the wand movements are the triggers that tell your core how to tune your magic.

"However, what we both just did is something that is very different to spell casting with a wand. What we did was wandless magic. It is more difficult to control than wand magic, as it is only your desire that makes your magic do what you want. Wandless magic is free magic, or what is known as raw magic. There is no core to help focus and aim it. There are no words or wand movements that will

trigger it to do what you want. Raw magic is completely controlled by the castors mind. Because the magic doesn't pass through a core, it won't ever become a spell or curse. However, it can be used in ways that wand magic can't."

Tomas pointed his wand at a book on one of the shelves and flicked his wand. The book flew over to him. He it did two more times, gathering a stack of three book in his lap. He then flicked his wand at one of the book and it went back to where it belonged. He repeated the process with the other two, plus the two books that he and Blake had called over before. He then set his wand down on the side table and looked to the book shelf to his right. Blake watched amazed, as a book came off the shelf and then another did as well. It stacked it's self on top of the first. The stack grew three more books before floating over to Tomas and hovering in front of him. Suddenly the books separated and all went back to their respective places.

"That is the huge difference between wand magic and wandless magic." Tomas said with a self-satisfied grin at the awed look on Blake's face. "With wandless magic, I can manipulate things physically and manifest my magic in the air. There is a lot that can be done with wandless magic, even if it can't be used to hex someone."

Blake just sat wide eyed and then he began to ramble. "Don't most people have to use a wand for everything? Only Merlin, the four founders of Hogwarts, and a few others were ever mentioned of being able to do magic without one. They were powerful, super powerful according to the stories. Merlin could control nature or that is what the book I read said. The Founders built Hogwarts, just the four of them, and they did the wards. Hogwarts, A History said that the wards haven't ever had to be upgraded. They are still as effective as the day they were set, which was 1000 years ago." Blake suddenly silence and looked at Tomas shocked. "How powerful are you?"

Tomas chuckled. "Calm down and breathe a minute, Blake."

Blake nodded and took a deep breath. He still couldn't believe that his father could do wandless magic, as if it was the most natural thing in the world. Then realization hit him. "I'll be able to do that!

You said with practice I will be able to. Does that mean I'm powerful too?"

"Yes, Blake you are powerful. You are going to be a very powerful wizard, even more so than I am." Tomas said with a smile. "You'll be up on the power scale with Voldemort and Albus Dumbledore when you get older."

"They can't do wandless magic, though." Blake pointed out. "Are you saying they are more powerful than you?"

"Yes, both are more powerful than me, though I am only a few pegs below them. However, you are wrong. Voldemort is capable of some wandless magic. He just never got proper training in it. Not to mention, what control he once had was most like lost with all the dark rituals he did on himself. Supposedly, his real name is Tom Riddle. As a child, he had enough control over his magic that he could use it to scare and hurt the children who resided in Wool's Orphanage with him." Tomas said with a sigh. He then gave Blake a serious look. "Blake, wandless magic has just as much to do with training as it does with magical power. The average witch or wizard could do minor things with wandless magic, if they were trained in using it, before they began using a wand."

"What you need to understand, is that magic is a natural energy. Like everything in nature, it desires to be stable. If its wielder can't give it stability, but a wand core can, then it will see the core as its master." Tomas explain in a lecturing manner. "As it is said, the wand chooses the wizard. For most people it is completely true. The core of a wand will choose the wizard or witch with magic it feels it can stabilize and easily overpower. For someone untrained in wandless magic, a wand core will command their magic. It will completely control it for them, as they can't do it themselves. It is near impossible for someone untrained in wandless magic to ever get a grasp on it after using a wand. Their magic becomes dependant on the core of their wand. It is that magical dependence that is the reason why accidental magic stops once young witches and wizards begin their magical education."

"However, if a person can control their magic before using a wand, then the reaction when they first use a wand is completely different. Their magic already recognizes them as its master. Instead of the core calling the person's magic into it, they have to give their magic

to the core." Tomas paused in his explanation to see if Blake was following. Blake gave a small nod and Tomas continued. "When wandless magic users say the words and do the wand movements of a spell, knowing the end results, they impart their desire into their magic before it even gets to the core.

"For a wandless magic user, a wand core only ever acts as a helper. The core of a wand is completely under a wandless magic user's command, just the same as their magic is. The core begins to depend on its wielder, instead of the wielder depending on the core. A wandless magic user can claim any wand and bend the core of that wand to their desire. A core that is compatible with them will produce the best results. However, they won't be hindered, if they have to use one that is incompatible, which is a very useful thing at times." Tomas said with a mischievous smile. "When a wandless magic user first receives a wand, the wand they are looking for, is one with a core that their magic can overpower. Where usually the wand chooses the wizard, it becomes the complete opposite. The magic of the wandless caster will choose the core it feels is easiest to bend to its will and will submit to its full control. A wandless magic user has free rein of their magic and will never be restricted to needing a core."

"Were you going to teach me wandless magic, or were you just going to give me a wand?" Blake asked looking slightly betrayed.

Tomas sighed. "I was planning on working with you on beginning to master control over your magic when you turned ten. My father didn't start working with me on wandless magic until then, so I was going to do the same with you. The closer you get to your eleventh birthday, the stronger your magic will become, and the more aware of it you will be. It helps when you can sense what you are expected to control. Beginning to learning your animagus this year would have helped build up your magical strength and helped you realize what your magic feels like."

"I can feel it though. When the book came, I could feel it." Blake told Tomas.

"Like I said, it all would have helped, but you are very strong already, Blake. That is something I did not realize. I knew you would be powerful. What happen with the police car was a sure sign of a powerful wizard in the making. James and Lily Potter were very

strong as well. It would be expected that their child would be just as powerful as them, if not stronger." Tomas said with a gentle smile. "I am powerful myself. When I adopted you, I knew you would become even stronger than what you originally would have been with my added blood and magic."

"So, now that I have some control of my magic can I get a wand?" Blake asked hopefully.

Tomas shook his head. "Legal age for a wand is eleven, so we won't be getting you one until then. A wand is sacred and buying one from a shady dealer would hurt you more than help you, once you got a proper one. The Knight family has never accepted anything of lesser quality than an Olivander's wand. Besides, what control you have now is weak. You need to practice it more. Until we can legally purchase you a wand, you can just work on controlling your magic wandlessly."

Blake nodded in agreement with an excited look in his eyes. He began scanning the books titles on the shelves where he knew the books on magical theory were kept.

"Those won't help." Tomas chuckled. "The use of wandless magic is a rare talent. It is a talent that those, who are trained in using it, desire to protect. It gives us an edge over other people. There has never been a book written about it. Just as over half the potions I have had you drink are not written down either. The method of Occlumency that I'm teaching you is not one you will find a book. Memory Manipulation is not something you will ever read about." Tomas gave him a serious look. "Blake, there are some things a person doesn't ever want stolen and the best way to protect those things is to make them as inaccessible as possible. A book can be pilfered or lost. However, a well guarded mind is the most inaccessible place you will ever find in the magical world. Only a Knight can give the knowledge of how to brew certain potion recipes, cast certain spells, erect and tear down certain wards, or manipulate magic in certain ways."

"I want to learn. I want to learn it all." Blake said eagerly.

"I will teach it you." Tomas promised. "However, today is Saturday. Go enjoy your day off. On Monday your testing begins."

Blake scowled at the idea of being tested. He got up to leave the library, being careful not to track mud, where he hadn't already tracked it.

"If you are staying inside, I want you to get yourself cleaned up." Tomas said sternly, making Blake pause in the doorway.

"Actually." Blake said and an innocent smile spread across his face. There was something he really wanted to do ever since he first heard it mentioned. The early July day was nice and would be perfect for it, if he could get his stubborn father to agree. He turned to look at his father with puppy dog eyes. "Will you, pretty please, teach me how to fly?"

"Not the puppy dog eyes." Tomas said dramatically and smiled at him. Blake ran back over to him and jumped up on his lap and looked at him pleadingly.

"Please, Daddy." Blake said in a small voice and stuck out his bottom lip adorably. "You said when the weather got better. The weather is better and it's a free day. I would love you forever."

"Ah!" Tomas said and threw his hands up in surrender. "You win. I wouldn't have been able to keep you off the damn brooms much longer anyways. James was a natural born flyer, and you most likely will be as well."

"Yay!" Blake yelled and jumped off Tomas' lap. He was about to take off running, but Tomas stopped him.

"We will walk, like calm rational people." Tomas said pointedly.

"How high can I go? How do you make it stop? How do you make it turn?" Blake asked excitedly, as he walked next to his father. Questions continued to fire out of his mouth, before his father could even begin to answer them. Eventually, they made it to the Quidditch pitch that sat in the backyard of Knight Mansion. His father got two brooms out of the broom shed.

"Okay, one thing you need to understand before you even touch a broom, is that if I catch you out here flying without either me or Nick watching you, I will tan your hide so that you are hurting for a week." Tomas said completely serious. "These things are fast and can take

you up to impressive heights. One mistake in the air and it could very easily end up being your last. I'm not going to tell you again. Your feet stay grounded unless an adult is out here with you. Got it?"

"Yes, Dad." Blake said with a vigorous nod.

His father wasn't big on discipline. Usually if he did something wrong his father gave him a lecture and then made him run the Course for a second time, or he would ground him to his room to write lines left handed. Only once had his father got so upset that he tanned him. He wasn't supposed to play with the potions stuff, but around two months ago he decided he wanted to test potions out. His father wouldn't let him, and he wanted to make something. He blew up a cauldron. Luckily, he ducked and avoided getting any on him, because the stuff started eating through whatever it touched. His father was furious and it wasn't because he destroyed the lab. Oh, his father made sure he knew that he didn't care about that. His father was mad, because he did something he was told not to do, even after the warning that he could easily get hurt or killed, if he played around with the potions things. He had put his life stupidly at risk.

This flying business sounded similar to the potions business. He didn't doubt that the threat his father just gave him was very real. He remembered exactly how bad he hurt, after his father punished him the last time, and he had no intention of making him that upset again. It was a week before he could sit normal. He didn't even get the vitalizing potion during that time. He had to heal naturally.

"Good, I can see you really mean that." Tomas said in approval. He then gave him a quick lecture on what to avoid and some of the basic controls. Blake listened with rapt attention. "Now hold your hand over your broom and say 'up'."

Blake stepped over to the broom he was going to use and did as instructed. The broom jumped in the air immediately. He grinned widely up at his father, as he mounted it. He couldn't wait to get in the air.

"I told you that you were born to fly." Tomas said, already mounted on his broom. He then pushed off the ground and flew up twenty feet.

He looked down at Blake and gave an encouraging smile. "Well, get up here."

Blake didn't need telling twice and he pushed off the ground. He stopped next to Tomas. Flying felt like the most natural thing in the world. He just knew what to do. He didn't even realize that how he stopped the broom, was exactly how his father had told him to. He just did it on pure instinct.

"From that grin on your face, I'll hazard a guess that that broom feels like an extension of your own body." Tomas said with a knowing grin. Blake nodded. "Let's see what you can do then."

Blake followed his father through the paces. They lapped the pitch a few times, before his father began to teach him how to do sharp turns, loops, and barrel roles.

"You're an amazing flyer." Tomas told him as they hovered 150 ft above the center of the pitch. "I want you to try a dive. Pull up on the broom as soon as you feel that the ground is too close. It won't be automatic, so give yourself five feet at least, just to be on the safe side, until you are more experienced."

"Five feet?" Blake asked looking startled. There was no way he was plunging to the ground and only pulling up when he was five feet from being a pancake.

"Trust me, you're going to want to wait that long." Tomas said. His eyes alight with life. "Diving on a broom is the greatest adrenaline rush you will ever find."

With that, Tomas plunged his broom for the ground. He let out a whoop of joy. Anything that made his father that happy had to be good. Blake steered his broom for the ground and pushed it in a dive. He let a whoop of his own as he felt the air rushing past him. Not only was he pushing his broom to high speeds, but gravity made it go even faster. He felt his heart beating at a quicker pace than when he first jumped off the high platform into the pool. However, this time he wasn't scared. He knew that he had control of the broom, and knew it was waiting for his command. He saw his father pull up just feet from the ground. Seconds later, he made it to the five foot mark and pulled up. He shot across the pitch, eventually slowing and stopping next to Tomas.

"So, what did you think?" Tomas asked with a huge grin.

"That was brilliant. Can we do it again?" Blake asked excitedly.

His father nodded, and they took off into the air again. They ended up flying for the rest of the afternoon and Blake couldn't get enough of it. He and his father raced each other around the pitch, doing loops, dives, barrel rolls, weaving through the goal hoops, and doing whatever else that suited their fancy. Finally, they had to head in for dinner upon the insistence of one of the elves.

Love as always goes out to my readers...yes that means YOU! Many thanks goes to those who have dropped a review, they are certainly helpful. So, remember I love to know what you all think about my writing. I realize I'm not the best with grammar, but I do try. If you find something major please tell me. Also, feedback on how the story is progressing is good as well. I write for myself, but I write for my readers as well.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(3); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn; Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntIt; Arsao Tome; call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD; Kayls Cullen; KoniK47(2); SuperiorShortness(2);

The Confidant – February 1990

The grandfather clock chimed loudly through the silence that had infected the elegantly decorated sitting room. Flames danced in the corner fireplace, fighting the cold winter air that threatened to consume the house. The warmth was nice. It added to the cozy feel of the soft woods and rich colors. The hour was still early, and the sun could just barely be seen rising in the sky through the expansive picture window. The two occupants in the room sat facing each other.

One, a man with rich golden locks and blue eyes, sat in a winged back armchair. The other, a boy of nine years with midnight blue eyes, sat on the couch. The boy sat with his back straight and legs out in front of him. He had an air of confidence, but small fidgets gave away his nervousness. He looked expectantly at the man across from him. The man didn't seem in any better shape than the boy. He too sat rigidly and seemed a bit unsure as to what he should do. The two stared at each other, sizing each other up as the clock chimed six times.

Neither one was prepared for the situation they found themselves in. An emergence of sorts had called away the boy's father for the next week. The man was not at the top of the list of people to watch the child, but as the others were needed or had other affairs...well, here he was. After all, the young Knight heir could not be left to fend for himself for a whole week. The fact that he was the Tomas Knight's son, his sole heir, well that made this more than just an annoying babysitting job.

Quite frankly the blond was almost positive that he was in over his head. Master Knight would kill him if he screwed this up. Screw up an assignment...fine, the man was okay with it...mistakes happen and all that. The fact that Master Knight's exact words were 'I expect Blake to be happy, healthy, and well cared for, when I get back. If he is not...I will kill you.' Obviously the point was clear, as he had said these words with a completely serious face and a promise in his tone.

If that wasn't enough, Nicholas West, who everyone knows is a mentor and father figure to Master Knight and a grandfather of sorts to Master Knight's son, pulled him aside. 'Carter, I was in your shoes 17 years ago when Elijah and Patrice were called away for an

extended amount of time. Trust me. You do not want to mess this up. The repercussions verses the rewards are at completely different ends of the spectrum. Blake is not a difficult child, but he will not be pleased with Tomas' absence. As a warning, keep him as happy as possible, and do not under any circumstance push him too much. He is rather ill tempered when Tomas is away. Just tread carefully and do your best to get Blake's favor.'

So...no pressure or anything. The blond man thought to himself weakly. Merlin, he didn't even know how to take care of a kid. He was only 22 after all. He didn't have a steady girlfriend, nor had he consider getting one. Let alone, had he even thought about getting married and having children. His job as a promotions investor for the Nimbus Company had him traveling all over, which made even thoughts about settling down rather difficult. In fact, it was his job that caused Master Knight's interest in him to begin with. He was easily able to gather intelligence from all around the world to bring back to the man. Master Knight found his position highly valuable. Not to mention, the man had told him that he greatly respected his perseverance as a muggleborn.

He had secured himself one of the top spots in Sales Promotion for the Nimbus Company in four short years. He had made many powerful contacts in several different countries. Plus, the percentage he got from his sales had put him very well off. He attributed his success to the fact that he was a people's person. He was good at dealing with stanchy purebloods and arrogant businessmen. However, in his opinion, the best part of his job was that it was more self-management than anything. It was his choice of when to setup meetings with the different Ministry Games Departments or with the owners of Quidditch teams and broom shops.

It was a year ago that Master Knight took notice of him. The man had wasted little time in offering him something he couldn't refuse. Within the last year, a simple show of the ring he wore on his left hand had gotten him in more doors than he could count. It was a ring showing he had the respect and protection of a prominent pureblood family. There was no denotation to which house had given such an honor, but those who doubted him for his blood no longer considered it an issue. It was like being given a free pass into pureblood society.

He had to cancel two of his meetings for this week. Instead of giving presentations to wealthy businessmen, he was going to have to figure out how to keep the kid across from him happy or else pay the very high price of his life, or so it seemed. Difficult pureblood bigots or over excited team mangers he could handle any day. However, dealing with a kid...that wasn't so easy. He was a single child growing up. He was a Ravenclaw while at Hogwarts, though he would have been a Slytherin if he was of purer blood. He tended to keep to himself and avoid conflict. If he had to, he would sooner smooth over his opponent with a few well chosen words, than enter an actual fight or argument. He had no experience in dealing with the temperaments of such an under developed mind as a child's was.

To add on to the already difficult task, Master Knight had given him a whole file that laid out all his rules regarding Blake's treatment and the schedule he expected Blake to follow, while he was away. He was going to fail miserably. He just knew it. He might as well kiss his life goodbye now.

"Are you sick?" Blake asked concerned, as he watched the man across from him progressively grow paler.

"No." The man answered shortly. He was so not going to survive this week.

"Oh..."Blake said and went back to being quiet. A few minutes later he opened his mouth again. "Did my father say where he was going?"

He froze, of course the first thing the kid had to bring up was Master Knight. He was under orders not to give that information to the boy. He was under death threat to keep the child happy. He was warned the kid was irritable, when Master Knight was away. Now what was he supposed to do? Honesty...he'll try that. Merlin knows Master Knight hated being lied to. "Um...I do know where he is going. However, I was told not to give that information to you. I'm sorry, but I cannot tell you anything about it."

Blake made a face and nodded in understanding. It was no different than when his father left all the other times for a few hours or a few days. He still wouldn't get any answers, not that he really expected any.

Blake pushed himself up off the couch. If he was going to be here for a whole week, then there was no need for the man to remain a stranger to him. After all, he still hadn't gotten an introduction. He was woken up by Nick and brought to this man's house in the short span of 30 minutes time. When they arrived, Blake found that his father was already here having a very serious conversation with the blond man, who was now sitting across from him. His father had come over after and told him briefly that he had to go. He bid him goodbye, while Nick seemed to have just as much of a serious conversation with the blond. Nick then came back over and bidding him goodbye as well. His father gave him one more kiss on the forehead and told him that he loved him. At this point, his father and Nick gave warning looks at the blond man and then activated their portkey. Blake walked the few short feet over to the man.

"I am Blake Alexander Knight. It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I do hope we can become friends over this next week." Blake said pleasantly and offered his hand. Surprise flitted across the man's face.

"Carter Rurik Mason." The man said. He took Blake's offered hand and shook it.

"Mr. Mason, would you happen to have some milk and perhaps something to eat for breakfast?" Blake asked politely.

"Right, of course you are hungry." Carter mumbled and looked like he wanted to hit himself for his stupidity. It said right in the file that Blake was to have breakfast within an hour after he had awoken. Carter got up and beckoned the boy to follow him. Blake did so obediently. "So, what would you like?"

"Well..." Blake started with a bit of excitement. He then shook his head with a guilty look. "Porridge and fruit, please."

Carter was surprised. That was the kid's prescribed breakfast, but he thought any kid would take advantage of a situation like this. Surely the kid knew he could beg anything off of him. Carter would have to jump as high as the moon, if the kid asked him to. Did he not realize his importance? "Okay, porridge and fruit it is. I don't have a house elf, so it will be a little bit of a wait."

"You do not have elves?" Blake asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Well, I'm muggleborn, so..." Carter trailed off, as they entered the pristine kitchen. He watched Blake freeze and look up at him sharply. He watched the boy's eyes travel to his left hand. Shock and then comprehension flashed across his face. He gained an impassive expression and entered the kitchen fully. Carter wasn't sure what to make of the boy's demeanor.

"I see." Blake said in understanding and sat himself at the counter. He turned to watch Carter with assessing eyes. "You have no family elf to inherit. Though, you do not have to inherit an elf. An elf can be bought for the right price. However, most often the ones for sale are not of good quality. Often times, they are completely barmy thanks to poor treatment at their previous master's hands. Really, it is rather crude what some people do to their elves."

Carter slowly walked around the counter and to the stove, as he listened to Blake, ignoring the boy's gaze. He wasn't sure what to make of the kid, but he was surprised at the intelligence of the child. When he had first seen what Master Knight wished the boy to study, he did not think a mere nine year old was actually capable of understanding such advanced material. However, it seemed that Blake might actually be plenty capable in understanding what Master Knight wished him to study.

Still, other things in that file he questioned, like the magical and physical training that the young boy was supposed to be keeping up with. It said that the boy was already capable and had fairly good control of wandless magic. Wandless magic was almost unheard of. The Knights were well known for it, but never had Carter thought that such a young person could be capable of it. Then there was the training for the boy's animagus form. He wasn't even aware that it was possible for a child to become an animagus. The physical exercise was very demanding, as well. He knew Master Knight was in top form, he had to be. However, he hadn't realized what training went into getting a Knight into that top form, let alone that that training started so young.

Carter froze in his movements, as recognition washed over him at what exactly was in the file Master Knight had left him. Information...information in the heap loads. Not only did it tell of Blake's studies, but it also told of his habits, his mentality, and his

medical history. It gave away sensitive information concerning Blake, as well as some sensitive information concerning the Knight family. Carter was beginning to comprehend what exactly Nicholas was alluding to. The Knights were well known for their history, but not much was actually known about the Knight family present day. Most people actually thought the family was dead and had been for a few centuries. He was among a privileged few, who were allowed to know differently. The file Master Knight gave him, plus whatever information Blake revealed over the week would give a very insightful look into the Knights, a look that only Nicholas had. Carter swallowed hard, as he set a pot of water to boil.

He realized now that it wasn't so odd that others more qualified than him just simply couldn't watch Blake. He realized that in the year he had known Master Knight, it wasn't his imagination that the man wanted something more from him. From the moment they met, Master Knight seemed to know him very well. The man had taken an interest in him and his future. He had helped his political standing, his financial standing, and his standing in the international markets. Every time he came in contact with Master Knight, the man made it a point to draw him into a conversation. The Master would check, not only, on the information he had gotten since they last spoke, but on his personal life and views as well. He freely gave him advice and guided him on certain decisions. It always seemed Master Knight's interest in him was more than his interest in the others...as if he had chosen him for something.

Carter felt like he was going to be sick or pass out, as he fully understood the situation he was now in. Not just anyone would be given access to such information, and not just anyone would be given the care of the Knight heir. He had heard the term confidant thrown around since the moment he agreed to be a part of Master Knight's council. That term was a position. It was a position that was feared and desired by those in the council. It was a death sentence or the greatest honor. The confidant's very life rested solely in the hands of the Knight they were tied to. Once chosen, there was no backing out, either the selected agreed to take up the position, or they welcomed death. If the Knight they were to be tied to refused them, then death became the only option. The child sitting at his counter literally had his life in his hands. He turned shakily to look at Blake, the one who could so easily bring about his end with one simple refusal.

"So, you figured it out, huh?" Blake asked casually. There was amusement in his midnight blue eyes. He adopted a serious look, as he gazed into Carter's wary face. "Every Knight heir has a confidant, a big brother or advisor of sorts, one who is a decade or so older and is outside of the bloodline. They can give a perception that differs from the families, one the heir cannot achieve on his own. Nick is my father's confidant. Clearly, my father wishes you to be mine."

"He was serious about the death threat, if this doesn't work out." Carter stated weakly in a quiet tone that was filled with dread.

"More serious than you can know." Blake replied ominously. "Father is very protective of me and very protective of what it means to be a Knight. He told me just recently, that he has had my confidant pegged for a year or so. However, this is the first time that a situation has arisen, where he will be gone for so long. It has forced his hand. If he had his way, I would not have met you for another five months."

"But I'm a muggleborn." Carter protested. Why would Master Knight choose a muggleborn for such a position in his son's life? Why him? Why not someone else?

"Every confidant is muggleborn, as we Knights are of pureblood. Our lives are ruled by the wizarding world customs and knowledge of old." Blake explained calmly and rested his hands together on top of the counter. Looking at him, Carter recognized the pose as the one Master Knight took, when he was about to explain something. It was a clear sign to everyone that what he was about to say was very important, and they had better listen up. "We dabble into trying to understand muggles, but it is not a view that we can fully grasp, as we have not lived that life or been a full part of that world. With our knowledge of old and a muggleborn's knowledge of the world outside of our own, we are capable of creating the new in our world."

"What?" Carter asked before he could stop himself.

"The porridge is burning." Blake said pointedly. He nodded to the stove where the porridge was indeed beginning to burn. Carter turned and quickly made to fix the burning food. "The Knight family history is a complex web. Over the evolving centuries, the Knight

history has become very intertwined with the important events of the wizarding world, as well as events that affect our kind in the muggle world. When the Ministry of Magic first formed, my ancestors were very much against it. They believed it would disrupt how we govern our lives as a people. Since the time of the Ministry's birth, the Knights have worked their way into the background. Yet, we still play a decisive role in many things. We held great power back then and to this day we still hold great power. However, now it is through secondary means that the Knight family operates. You are a part of that secondary means, Mr. Mason."

"Your roll in all of this has been to be an information gatherer. Every confidant is an information gatherer. The information you give my father, and eventually the information you will give me, helps the Knight family keep tabs on the happenings of the world. There are others, some of whom you have met, that give him votes in the Wizengamot and other important influential governing bodies all over the world. There are those, who assist him with eliminating threats. Though, you already knew all of this." Blake said with a quirk of his lips. "What you and many others do not realize, is that with every action my father and my ancestors have taken, there have been positive changes for the wizarding race as a result."

"It is not about heroics or politics. It is not about trying to keep the wizarding world a secret from the muggles. Those things do play a role in all of this, but there is a greater purpose." Blake informed with a proud air. "All of what we do has been in an attempt to preserve the old, while bringing in the new. We try to prevent the stagnation of our kind, while keeping our traditions and way of life alive. We try to protect our kind from threats, whether muggle or magical. We try to keep the balance of prestige and honor that is slowly being lost to arrogance and ignorance. The Knight family seeks to preserve what the Ministry and certain others seek to destroy. The confidant's place in all of this is to help keep the Master's or heir's head on straight. You must have extraordinary patience and a convincing tongue, if my father has chosen you as mine."

"Why would that be?" Carter asked as he took in the information that Blake had just parted onto him. He hadn't realized that his role as an informant to Master Knight actually had such an effect on the world. He knew Master Knight did good things, for the most part anyways, but he hadn't realized the depth of his actions.

"You'll see." Blake said with mischief in his eyes.

Carter just nodded and turned to finish fixing Blake's breakfast. "How'd you know that I was the one your father chose? It did not seem your father informed you that it was me before hand. You didn't know when you first got here."

"Over the last seven months, my father has been drilling the basics of the Knight family history and its workings into my head. I knew that my father would not trust just anyone to watch me for a week." Blake said, as he accepted a bowl of porridge, a small plate of sliced apples, and a glass of milk. "Then you said you were a muggleborn. That is like sending up red sparks. As I said, every confidant has been a muggleborn. The thing that confirmed it is that you are wearing my family's ring of protection. The Knight family does not just give those out. Only a confidant ever receives one."

"Are you sure you are supposed to be telling me all of this?" Carter asked unsurely. Blake seemed more than willing to freely part information on the Knight family to him. Carter wasn't sure that the kid was supposed to tell him all that he had so far.

"You will be told all of this anyways. I do not know details of my father's dealings. He wishes me to be a kid. You are the one he will inform of all he is doing, until I am old enough. You will be the one to watch over me, when he is away." Blake said, after swallowing a bite of apple. "You will be told of many things, the inner most workings of the Knight's Blade, the inner most workings of the Knight family. You will fully understand what it means to hold the honorable position of confidant to a Knight. I cannot tell you much, because I myself do not know, and I will not know until Dad feels that I should. You will be my acting council. You will have all the information that I am not allowed to have yet. You will look out for my best interest, when my father cannot."

Carter let out a long breath as everything fully impacted him. Master Knight believed him to be the best choice to take on the role of confidant to his son. That honor was...it was extreme. It was also a huge responsibility. If he fully understood what Blake was saying, he would be acting as godfather or as a protective older brother to the kid. He wasn't sure what he thought about that quiet yet.

Blake, well the kid seemed intelligent beyond what he could believe. For a nine year old he sure understood a lot. Most nine year olds were whiny, rude, and too busy with their heads up in the clouds to actually care about learning or manners. As a Ravenclaw he always respected intellect and propriety. Though, he wasn't that fond of children, Master Knight's son seemed different than most. Blake was polite, very polite. He was capable of understanding concepts and actually forming an opinion on them. As he said, the treatment some house elves received was rather crude.

Yet, he could see the child in Blake, the laughter and mischief in his eyes and the sly quirk of his lips. He didn't doubt that the boy could be trouble when he wanted to be. He had seen that look on the faces of well known pranksters during his time at Hogwarts. With how smart Blake clearly is, Carter would hazard a guess that if the boy was to ever attend Hogwarts, he would create a bang worthy of the legendary group that every prankster since aspired to match, the group known as the Marauders. That sort of witty humor he could definitely respect, so he definitely didn't dislike the kid. Actually, if anything he found him interesting. Maybe he might survive this week after all. No uppity purebloods and no little brats either, he might actually enjoy this small break from his usually hectic life.

He sat down quietly at the counter next to Blake. He contemplated what exactly Master Knight expected from him, as he watched Blake eat in silence. The kid seemed to recognize that he needed time to think this over. After all, it was a rather large bombshell to drop on someone. He wondered, if Master Knight planned for them to discover his intended position in Blake's life, or if he was planning on telling them, when he got back. Who was he kidding? The man was crafty, of course he planned it. At any point he could have told either one of them before he left. He had to of known with how smart Blake is that the boy would figure it out almost instantly. On top of that, the Master had been practically grooming him for it since they met a year ago. Maybe it was some form of bonding for them to find out together like they did. He certainly felt more...willing...to take the position. It wasn't like he could deny it. He was chosen and if he backed out it was his life. Yet, with talking to Blake briefly, he already wasn't sure that he truly wanted to dismiss the offer, even if he actually could turn it down.

He never really considered taking on such responsibility, he really did dislike kids. The death threat on Master Knight's part, he had at first thought was because he told the man that he wasn't fond of children, and he thought he should have someone else watch Blake. In fact, Master Knight had inquired about his feelings toward kids several times, and all those times he told him he didn't really care for them. Every time he said it, it just seemed to make the man happier. Carter originally thought he was a bit nuts for it, but now...well, maybe he didn't dislike all kids. Maybe Blake was just an exception for him. Blake didn't seem like the average kid at any rate. In reality, the very blood in his veins made him different than the average kid. The boy was a Knight for crying out loud. So really, he did dislike kids, but Blake wasn't part of that generalization for him.

He still couldn't see how he was fit for being the boy's confidant. He didn't really want such responsibility. He never had. It was the reason he liked his work so much. It wasn't a nine to five job with a salary and a time clock. He set his schedule and chose his clients. His wage depended on his sales. If he decided to slack off and take it easy, he could. If he decided he felt ambitious, he could bring in over 2,000 galleons in one month. There wasn't any responsibility or accountability outside of his own. However, kids and girlfriends were not only a responsibility, but also a liability. Yet, it seemed he would have to accept having a liability. However, Blake didn't seem that bad for a liability. It could be worse, if he really wanted to get into it and analyze the situation. Blake appeared well manner, intelligent, and had a good sense of humor. He wasn't any snot nosed, pamper, prince that threw tantrums, when things didn't go his way. However, the Knight heir never was.

He remembered hearing one of the senior members saying he was surprised when Nicholas was chosen as the Master's confidant. That he never believed the man the type for it. He expressed his surprise at how close Nicholas had grown to Master Knight just weeks after he was chosen. That for a man who seemed to not want to care for anything, he had become very attached to Tomas Knight. Carter knew that he was never against becoming attached...well maybe he was. He didn't want attachments. Attachments turn into responsibilities and then into liabilities. So, maybe he was the perfect fit for being Blake's confidant. That is if he were to consider how similar he was to Nicholas, when the man was first chosen as the Master's confidant, but what was the advantage of it?

Him...a muggleborn, a Ravenclaw, a man who disliked kids, a man who didn't want attachments, and a man who could smooth talk his way through a sea of arrogant uppity businessmen. Why would he be the first choice for Blake's confidant? Shouldn't the confidant be knowledgeable of pureblood customs, shouldn't he be loyal, shouldn't he actually like kids? He looked down at Blake. The kid was taking precise and perfect bites of apple. Maybe it was because the news was unexpected, that it had shaken him, or maybe it was because he knew he didn't really have a choice, but he kind of wanted to be there for the kid. Maybe it would be nice.

How was he to know, really? He had never actually experienced having another living soul trust him on such levels. He had never allowed deep connections like that to form. In essence Blake held his life in his hands, but he had the reverse. Blake's very life would depend on him. His betrayal could not only end Blake, but the Knight bloodline. The threat of death to the confidant was how the Knights evened the playing field. It was how their trust could be given so easily and the bond between them and their confidant became so strong. He knew Nicholas loved Master Knight as a son. Would he eventually love Blake as a son? Another jolt of understanding coursed through him.

Carter mentally snorted. Tomas Knight was a genius. Get someone who doesn't have any attachments, one who doesn't have any love or loyalty placed elsewhere. Then present it in the right way, that you want all that unused love, loyalty, and caring to be applied to your son. Ta-dah, you have the perfect person to trust with your son's life. If you did it right, their loyalty would be to your son, their love would be for your son, and their main concern would be your son. It was perfect, and if Carter was honest with himself, Master Knight had presented this situation in the right way. The man didn't outright tell him the job was his, making it so it didn't actually seem forced. Yet, the man had made sure that he understood the basics of what a confidant was. Many members of the council had spoken to him about it. If he had to guess, he would say that it was on Master Knight's urgings that they did. Therefore, when realization hit, he knew what his options were. The man then let the boy, who he was to be confidant to, be the one to pull him in. Carter shook his head slightly. Master Knight was truly smart.

On top of everything that he was feeling concerning the situation already, he also felt a sense of obligation and duty to fulfill the roll

Master Knight wanted him to. He had great respect for Master Knight. The man had helped him out considerably over the last year. Not to mention, he truly did not have any loyalty placed elsewhere. He was a muggleborn. He had no name to honor. He wasn't tied down, and he didn't have a family of his own. He was a single child, whose parents weren't big fans of his magic. They didn't hate him, but they weren't really on good terms. There had been an unspoken farewell, when he got on the train for his seventh year. He had been fending for himself ever since...well up until last year, when Tomas Knight walked into his life. The man had given him a lot.

Carter looked down at Blake again. The boy looked up at him and smile. Carter momentarily marveled at the innocence and life the child held. So, he was to be this boy's confidant. He smiled back and the boy positively beamed. What better place to put his complete loyalty than in the Knight family?

Love, love, love your reviews, so thank you so much to those who did leave one. I'm glad to hear you thoughts on what I have written.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(3); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn(2); Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntIt; Arsao Tome; call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD; Kayls Cullen(2); KoniK47(2); SuperiorShortness(3);farwalker;

1990 Quidditch World Cup – August 1990

"It still amazes me the changes in Tomas' demeanor, when Blake is around." Carter mused from the camp chair he was sitting in. The sun was setting over the Canadian horizon, and a make shift fire burned warmly in front of him. Mountain peaks and ancient forests framed the grassy British Columbian valley. Thousands of witches and wizards from many different nations had set up camp in designated areas all around.

"Blake always brings back the young man I once knew." Nick said with a fond smile. He shifted forward in the chair he occupied beside the young blond man. He stirred the fire with a stick, before adding another log from the stack of wood next to his chair. He turned back to Carter with a small amount of sadness in his hazel eyes. "Tomas wasn't always so stern and cold. Blake reminds me of what Tomas used to be, before he lost his parents. Elijah was a warm man. He always had kind words and a giving heart. However, Tomas runs things differently than his father. He is determined to have justice. He won't rest until Voldemort is completely dead. Who Blake was before the adoption...well, it doesn't really help the situation."

A loud shriek of laughter broke through the evening air, pulling their attentions to the two figures that were a short distance from them. Both were dressed in muggle blue jeans and cotton t-shirts. Their tan skin seemed to take on a gold quality in the setting sun. The two looked so similar in that moment, that there was no mistaking them for anything but being father and son. They watched as the two Knights had an impromptu wrestling match in the grass. It was more like a tickle war if anything. Tomas had Blake pinned and was tickling him mercilessly with a huge grin on his face. Blake's laughter rang out full of joy and life, as he tried to fend his father off.

"That did surprise me...the truth about who Blake once was. The fact he is adopted was enough of a surprise on its own." Carter admitted, as he took in the scene. To him, Blake was very much Tomas' son. He couldn't picture the boy belonging to anyone else. It just didn't make sense. He was curious though. He couldn't help but wonder at the choice Tomas had made. It was rare that a pureblood adopted, let alone adopted by blood and magic. However, it wasn't something he was willing to ask Tomas about. Tomas still intimidated him a bit. They were only starting to form a friendship.

"Why did Tomas adopt? Why did he not take a wife and have an heir?"

"It's complicated." Nick sighed and a solemn look crossed his face. His eyes focus on the two Knights, but it seemed as if he wasn't truly seeing the reality in front of him. "Tomas' interests were completely wrapped up in the Knight's Blade. He spent hours researching and doing anything he could to track down Voldemort's objects. He had no thoughts of getting married or having children. For a decade, all he cared about was finding a way to defeat Voldemort. I tried many times to suggest dating or even taking out a marriage contract, but he would not hear one word about it. He said he had no time to worry about such things and dismissed the notion every time it was brought up. Desperate, I finally confronted him with the fact that he needed to keep his family name alive. That it was his duty to keep the legend of the Knights going. I told him, if he was going to continue on with his obsession to eradicate Voldemort, then he needed to make sure the Knight bloodline was preserved at the very least. I knew Voldemort would come back and when he did, Tomas would go after him with a vengeance. I was afraid he would get himself killed, seeing as he had nothing holding him back. It was like Tomas was planning it that way."

"So you convinced him to adopt." Carter said in understanding.

"Something like that." Nick said with a hint of regret, as he turned his attention to the fire. He scratched the back of his neck with a sheepish look and glanced back at the two Knights. "We eventually had a huge row about it all. I ended up telling him that I thought he was a failure to his father. I told him that Elijah would never have put vengeance before the Knight's honor. I told him that he was being selfish and everything a true Knight would never be. I accused him of not caring about his family traditions or about anything other than killing Tom Riddle. I told him he didn't deserve the right to bear the name Knight, nor did he deserve my affections and concern any longer. I told him that I refused to continue to watch him plan out his own death and the ending of the Knight bloodline. I all but ordered him to kill me. I told him I was done, I wanted out no matter the price, and that I couldn't stand to be near him any longer, if he was seriously going to just continue on as he had for the last decade."

Nick took a calming breath, as he remembered how angry and upset he had been with Tomas that day. "As you know, there is no out for

us. We can't just walk away. The confidant knows too much to just be obliterated. After his initial shock wore off, he kind of just stared at me. I wasn't sure, if he was going to kill me, or if I had actually knocked some sense into him. Finally, he asked what I wanted him to do. He said he didn't want to just take a wife for the sole purpose of getting her pregnant and even then just hoping they had a baby boy. Eventually, we agreed he should adopt. It would be easier for him to open up and love a child, than it would be for him to take a wife and try to work a relationship."

A soft smile formed Nick's lips, as he returned his attention to the two Knights. "I believe, when Tomas actually does get married, he will marry for love. He seemed very uncomfortable and against a forced relationship by marriage contract. As it stands, Blake will carry on the Knight's honor and Tomas has someone that he can call family. I've never been able to give back to Tomas what he lost, when Elijah and Patrice died. But Blake, the kid wormed his way into Tomas' heart almost instantly. He lessens the pain and loneliness Tomas has lived with for the last decade. I could see the changes in Tomas within the first week of Blake's adoption. He was actually smiling again, instead of giving forced smiles for my benefit. His attentions shifted from trying desperately to find all the pieces of Voldemort's soul, to loving and caring for his son. Blake is exact what Tomas needed. Though, I believe Blake needed Tomas almost as much as Tomas needed him. Those muggles were not good to him."

"You got some balls." Carter said shaking his head. He could never outright challenge Tomas like Nick had.

"You lay into Blake, do you not?" Nick asked knowingly.

"When he needs it." Carter agreed.

"Someday, Blake will be the Master. And someday, you will feel the need to yell at him, until he gets his head back on straight. That is our job. We are the ones who make sure they don't mess up." Nick said with a nod at the two Knights.

Tomas had let Blake flip him. Blake was now sitting cross legged on Tomas' chest and talking animatedly. Tomas had his hands resting behind his head and was watching Blake. The boy had his full and complete attention.

"Do you think the Romanians will bring a real dragon?" Blake asked with an excited face.

"I don't know. Probably not, dragons are dangerous." Tomas told him with a noncommittal shrug.

"But it would be so cool to see a real dragon." Blake reasoned. His tone suggesting that everyone should want to walk up to a dragon and make friends with it.

"I've seen a real dragon...and it was pretty cool." Tomas admitted with a smile on his face.

"Really?" Blake asked with wide eyes, and he leaned forward a bit with interest.

"Really, she was terrorizing a muggle village in Croatia." Tomas said with a huge grin at the look on Blake's face. "I helped to subdue her and bring her to the reserve in Romania."

"Awesome!" Blake exclaimed with a wicked grin.

"You've been hanging around Carter too much." Tomas said with a laugh. Blake stuck his tongue out at him, and his father quickly snatched it between his fingers.

"eh... 'et 'o!" Blake said trying to free his father's hold.

"Did you say something? I couldn't quite understand you." Tomas said feigning ignorance, but at his annoyed look he let go.

"What do you think is Peru's mascot? I bet it is a chimera." Blake said excitedly, easily forgetting his previous annoyance.

Tomas snorted. "What is your fixation with dangerous animals?"

"Well...because I am one." Blake said superiorly.

"Yes, a dangerous, vicious, little panther you are." Tomas said with a chuckle. "You could take down a dragon or chimera any day with your fearsome roar."

Blake made an indignant face. "Mock me now, but when I get older _ "

"You will have those big mean dragons and chimeras running from you in fear." Tomas said amicably.

"You better count on it." Blake said crossing his arms, trying to look sour. It didn't work, as his father started tickling him again, causing him to fall sideways into the grass. Once more his laughter filled the air.

"Are you ready to eat yet?" Carter called over to them. He and Nick were looking at the two with great amusement.

Blake nodded through his laughter and freed himself from his father with some difficulty. He went over to the fire and sat down in one of the two open camp chairs. Carter gave him a smile, as he plopped down next to him. His father took the chair on his other side.

"So..." Tomas said looking expectantly at Nick.

Nick rolled his eyes and got up. "Helpless you are."

"Oh come on, if I could use magic this would be no problem." Tomas complained.

Carter just laughed, as the two Knights sat trying to figure out how they were supposed to get dinner without house elves or magic.

"This is why we brought you with us." Blake said with a scowl and pointed at the laughing blond man.

"Yes, whatever would you two do without us?" Carter asked dramatically and ruffled Blake's hair. Blake swatted his hand away with a mock pout.

Nick came back over with four odd shaped metal sticks. Meat was attached to the ends of them. He passed one to Tomas, Blake, and Carter, before sitting down and holding his over the fire.

"What is this?" Tomas asked, looking at the meat on his stick.

"It is called a hot dog." Nick informed simply.

"Dudley likes these." Blake said.

"You've never had one?" Tomas asked. He frowned as Blake shook his head. He had to push back his strong dislike for Blake's muggle relation. They had already been dealt with. "Do you think it's safe to eat?"

"Tomas, just cook it and eat it." Nick instructed.

Carter looked highly amused, as he silently busied himself with cooking his own hot dog over the fire, and watched out of the corner of his eye, as Blake made faces at his hot dog, and Tomas kept looking from the fire to the meat on his stick. Blake seemed to be thinking hard about how best to approach the situation as well. Carter knew Blake had some muggle cooking experience, but it was limited to a pan on the stove and flipping bacon. Though, cooking a hot dog over a fire wasn't all that challenging. However, both Knights were used to elves making their meals. He doubted Tomas had much experience at all with cooking, even with using magic. He had to hold back a laugh at the apprehensive looks on Tomas' and Blake's faces.

"Everyone else is using magic." Blake pointed out. As if to emphasize his point, he made a sweeping motion with his arm at those, who had set up camp around them.

It was true. There were several people using magic. However, Nick and Carter decided this would be a good learning experience for the two Knights, and therefore, there was no magic allowed. Everything was muggle. Even the cooler had ice in it instead of cooling charms. Carter had built a fire and lit it with matches. Nick had Tomas help him set up the three small dome tents. Tomas was not thanking him for that experience. Blake had just watched and laughed at them all.

Tomas and Blake finally began cooking their hot dogs, after a pointed look from Nick. Blake had a look of concentration as he held the stick over the fire.

"How do I know when it is done?" Tomas asked after a minute and with a hint of impatience.

Carter and Nick both laughed. Tomas sent them a mild glare.

"I'll tell you when you can eat it." Nick promised.

After another few minutes, Blake decided he was tired of waiting and stuck his hot dog in the flames, before anyone could stop him. The hot dog caught fire, and Blake's eyes widened comically.

"No, Blake –" Carter said and handed his stick to Nick, so he could rescue Blake's dinner. Blake willingly gave his stick to Carter. The man blew on the burning hot dog, until the flames were out. He sighed and looked down at Blake's imploring face. "Fine, you can have mine."

Blake beamed. Nick chuckled and shook his head.

"Nick, if I stick mine in the fire can I have yours?" Tomas asked with a winning smile.

That got a grumble in response. Nick got up and handed back Carter's cooked hot dog, before taking Tomas' from him. There was a quirk on his lips that suggested he was trying hard not to smile. Carter followed him over to the cooler, where they had the fixings for the hot dogs. The two men came back over, giving the Knights the two perfectly browned hot dogs. Carter's was black and Nick's was only warm.

"Is this healthy? It doesn't look like it." Tomas said as he assessed his hot dog, which was drenched in ketchup, mustard, relish, and sauerkraut.

"Tomas, eat your hot dog." Nick said sternly. "It's good. You will like it. You are on vacation, so just give it a rest for once."

"It's good." Blake said in agreement. There was ketchup and mustard smeared on his face. "Messy though."

Carter quickly wiped Blake's face at seeing Tomas' stress. Never had he let Blake eat something that caused such a mess. Blake made a face at being treated like a baby, but seeing as he was holding his hot dog and trying not to make more of a mess, he allowed it.

Eventually, they made it through the difficulties of dinner. Blake ended up curled up asleep on Tomas' lap as the night wore on. The three men sat around the fire and chatted quietly as to not wake Blake. Their conversation ventured into many different areas of discussion. However, they kept coming back to the Finals Game of the Quidditch World Cup that would take place the next day.

"Romania will definitely win it." Nick said positively.

"Nah, Peru will take the cup, but Romania will put up a good show." Carter argued.

"I have 200 galleons on Dalca catching the snitch at any rate." Tomas said seriously. "Romania's chasers are not the best, Peru does have a slight advantage there, but Dalca is a good seeker."

"Peru's seeker, Chávez, I wouldn't write him off." Carter told him. "He's young, but he has potential. If they don't take the Cup this year, they will win it within the next few Cups, once he becomes more experienced."

"Most likely, but I don't think this will be their Cup." Nick said shaking his head.

Tomas yawned, his response dying with it. "I think I'll turn in."

"Goodnight." Nick said as Tomas carefully got up, trying not to wake Blake. Blake made a sound of protest, as Tomas cradled him to him gently. Tomas hushed him, and Blake fell back to sleep.

"Night." Carter said quietly.

Tomas nodded tiredly and carried Blake to their tent. Nick and Carter just sat to quietly watching the fire spark and crackle. Both were clearly waiting for the other to speak, while deep in thought themselves.

"Something on your mind?" Nick asked after twenty minutes of silence stretched between them. He knew something had been on the younger man's mind all day. He had been very inquisitive about Tomas' past and his views since they had arrived that morning. Nick knew something had to of come up concerning Blake. Carter didn't

seem sure, if he should take it to Tomas, or if he should just leave it be.

"Blake's been asking me about Hogwarts." Carter said, pressing his lips together in worry and uncertainty.

"I see." Nick said in understanding and he lean back in his chair pensively, his fingers drumming on the armrest. "Does he...?"

"I think so." Carter nodded. "He mentions James and Lily. He found out from Hogwarts, A History that they were Head Boy and Girl. I guess they also held top spots in their year group for all seven years that they attended. Lily was a Perfect as well, and James was Captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch Team. He seems very interest in it all. He badgered me about my own experience all morning, while I was helping him pack."

"Tomas won't be pleased." Nick said seriously. "The Knights have not attended Hogwarts since the forming of the Ministry. There is a reason that the family worked their way into the background. The threat against them for what they choose to stand for is a serious one...exposure isn't to be taken lightly."

"I think Blake understands that. I don't believe he will dare bring up what he really wants to Tomas." Carter said, shaking his head.

"You're thinking of bringing it up to Tomas." Nick stated knowingly.

"It's crossed my mind. Hogwarts is a rite of passage. Not to mention, I think Blake would benefit from having a friend or two around his own age. He has way too much energy for any adult to keep up with." Carter said earnestly. "Hogwarts is his blood right at any rate."

Nick sighed and rubbed his face with his hands. "I think your right. I've always thought that Tomas should have experienced Hogwarts. It is part of our traditions for young witches and wizards to grow up together in Hogwarts Castle. The Knights have missed out on something very important for the last 300 years by not going."

"Do you think Tomas would consider letting him go?" Carter asked with a bit of hope, but overall he seemed doubtful. "I know exposure is a risk, but I get the feeling Blake really wants this. He loves

Tomas to death, but he is curious about James and Lily. They are still a part of him after all."

"The exposure of the Knight family is inevitable." Nick said seriously with an apprehensive look. "I thought in the last war Elijah was going to have to step out from the shadows. Things got very bad, and if he was not killed when he was, I think he would have. Even now, there is only so much Tomas can do in the background. With that idiot Fudge newly elected in office and with the looming rebirth of Voldemort..."

"Plus, Dumbledore meddling in all affairs he can get his hand in, citing 'for the greater good' everywhere he goes. He may have good intentions, but his methods are skewed." Carter inserted. "The outlook for the British Wizarding world, and in turns our world as a whole, really doesn't look so good, does it?"

"Indeed not." Nick agreed solemnly. "I'll test the waters with Tomas. You should try to convince Blake to bring Hogwarts up to his father. Tomas is incapable of denying him anything. He's already planning a trip to Paris."

"They just got back from Ireland not two months ago." Carter said surprised.

"As I said, Tomas cannot deny Blake. What that boy wants, he gets." Nick said with an amused smile. "Though, in Tomas' eyes, Blake has earned everything. Blake has worked hard over the years to master his Occlumency. He has followed the rigorous schedule Tomas set him with very little complaint. Knights live by the policy work hard, play hard. Nothing is ever done in a cursory manner with them."

"We should get some rest." Carter said with a yawn. "Blake will probably wake us up at an ungodly hour tomorrow morning."

"I think it would be smart to try and cook breakfast before they get up." Nick mused and then chuckled. "I thought hot dogs were simple enough, but I guess I was wrong."

Carter shook his head. "I rather not eat anymore burnt food."

The two men headed to their tents, after bidding each other goodnight. Both were still laughing at the day they had trying to get Tomas and Blake to act like muggles. For living six years in the muggle world, Blake was ignorant of many things. Then again living with the Dursley family hadn't exactly been living. He was never exposed to the majority of the muggle world. Boy Scouts was a foreign concept to him, therefore muggle style camping was as new to him as it was to Tomas. Not to mention, Blake was well settled into the magical world and had gotten used to using magic for most things. The day had been interesting to say the least.

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"Wake up!"

Tomas groaned, as Blake yelled in his ear. He cracked an eye open to find his sons face inches from his own. As far as he could tell the sun wasn't even up yet.

"Wake uuuuuppp!" Blake whined and poked him.

"Blake, what is it?" Tomas asked in a mumble.

"I'm cold." Blake told him. "...and the ground is hard."

"Blake, we're camping like muggles. What did you expect?" Tomas asked tiredly. Personally he had to agree with his son's complaints. He wanted to curse Nick for making him make an oath not to use magic unless it was a dire situation that affect their safety or health.

"I don't like camping like muggles, if I have to be cold." Blake whined with a shiver was evident in his voice.

"Alright." Tomas said and got up. He shuddered when the frosty night air clung to him, as he got out of his sleeping bag. He quickly rearranged their sleeping environment so that they would lie on Blake's sleeping bag and have his spread over them. He had Blake snuggle up beside him and tucked the sleeping bag tight around them. "Better?"

"The ground is still hard." Blake murmured sleepily and he burrowed into Tomas' side.

"We'll file a complaint with Manager Nick tomorrow." Tomas told him. He kissed the top of Blake's head, before drifting back to sleep.

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When the sun finally rose, both Knights were less than eager to get up. The morning chill was not favorable to them. It took promises of a hot breakfast and tea to get them out of bed. Even then, Blake was wrapped up in his father's coat, and he had a few layers on underneath. Tomas only wore a thin sweater, as he refused to let Blake freeze.

"Nick, the ground is harder than a rock. This muggle camping business is outrageous." Tomas told him with a scowl, as he accepted his tea.

"I'm not even going to point out that you have never slept on a rock, so you can't make that comparison." Nick said, as he passed a cup of tea to Carter as well.

"And it's cold without warming charms." Blake added, ignoring Nick's comment as he curled up in his camp chair. He was thankful for the fire burning a few feet from him. He hadn't been so cold in over two years. His father had never let him go outside without making sure he would be comfortable in whatever weather was occurring that day. On cold days he wore cloaks with warming charms, and on hot days his clothes were layered in cooling charms.

"I don't believe I've ever seen a Knight with his pristine feathers so ruffled." Nick said with a grin at the two upset wizards.

It was true too. Neither one looked like they had gotten a good night's rest. Their hair was still mussed up from sleep and both were looking far from happy.

"I take it we aren't going muggle camping again." Carter said, sharing Nick's amusement. Though, he didn't look like he had such a great night either.

"I prefer wizard camping." Tomas stated plainly. "Next World Cup I'm not making any stupid oath not to use magic."

"Here, here" Blake agreed. "Magic is so much better than muggle means. It makes life so much easier. How muggles manage without magic is shocking."

Nick snorted. "A bit spoiled there, Little Knight."

"I'm only speaking the truth." Blake said with an infectious grin. He knew that his magic and his father spoiled him. How he was spoiled wasn't limited to beginning privileged with having a life as a magical and growing up in a magical household. He knew that even most wizarding kids didn't have the life he had. His father made sure he had the best of everything, and he made sure that he was not ignorant of the world he lived in. Most wizard children did not have the opportunity to even begin studying any form of magic, before they turned 11. Most wizard children were not privileged with learning to fly a real broom at such a young age. Most wizard children rarely left their family property. The exceptions were for events and visiting family friends.

While his father kept him secluded for the first year and eight months, now was a different story. With mastering Occlumency, his father was more than willing to show him the world. They went to Ireland and now they had spent a few weeks touring Canada, before arriving yesterday to attend the Quidditch World Cup. His father had promised him two weeks in France as well. He knew that he was more than spoiled. He really couldn't deny it. Over the last two years or so, he was thankful every day that Nick had rescued him and brought him to his father.

Carter passed out a cup of porridge to each of them. Tomas looked happy at having something healthy for breakfast. The fact that he didn't have to cook it was an added bonus.

"Didn't you like my cooking?" Blake asked cheekily, as he accepted the porridge.

"I don't think you'll be cooking anything anytime soon." Carter said seriously.

After breakfast passed, the group actually got ready for the day. The sun was beginning to heat the earth, so they all wore shorts and t-shirts. Blake pulled Tomas, Nick, and Carter over to the area setup for selling merchandise. Excitement was in his eyes, as the

anticipation for the Cup overcame him with the intense environment. All the witches and wizards were in high spirits, as they shopped.

"Dad, will you buy me a Dalca jersey?" Blake asked as they entered a hut selling Romanian fan mementoes.

"Sure, go pick out the one you want." Tomas told him.

Blake wandered over to the teams jerseys. He was more than aware of the three sets of eyes on him, watching to make sure he didn't find trouble. He looked at the designs and wasn't sure if he wanted the dark blue jersey or the violet one. Eventually he decided on the dark blue one. The color of it was close to the color of his eyes. The name 'Dalca' and the number '7' were written across the back in violet letters. The shield of the Romanian National Quidditch Team was on the front, left breast. A fierce black dragon, breathing out flames every few seconds, danced over the shield. He found his size and brought it over to his father.

The next hut Blake pulled them into was Docker's Quidditch Supplies. Brooms lined the right wall, while Quidditch gear was spread throughout the rest of the hut.

"Blake, come here a minute." Tomas called him over from by the helmets and other protective gear. He put one of the helmets on Blake's head and strapped wrist guards on his arms. He fitted him in all the seeker gear. "What do you think? Think you can take on a few bludgers now?"

"Who is going to be hitting bludgers at me?" Blake challenged, while grinning madly.

"I will, of course. We need to train you up as a seeker." Tomas said casually.

"Why? When am I ever going to play?" Blake asked confused now.

Tomas' eyes flitted over to Nick and Carter. Both gave him questioning looks. He looked back at Blake and gave him a mischievous grin. "You never know. Maybe in a few years you will be on a team. Blake, you can tell me anything, no matter what it is. You know that, right?"

"Yeah, I know." Blake said quietly and shifted nervously under his father's suddenly intense gaze.

"Good." Tomas quipped and gave Blake a reassuring smile. "So, what do you say? Want to learn to be a seeker? Or is there another position you desire?"

"Seeker for sure." Blake said excitedly.

"Then a seeker you shall be. Merlin knows you have the natural talent for it." Tomas told him happily.

When they went up to cashier to pay, the owner recognized Carter. He drew him into a conversation, while counting out their merchandise and accepting payment for it.

"So, is there any secret information from the Nimbus Company that I can get off you, Mr. Mason?" The owner asked Carter good-naturedly.

"I don't know how much of a secret it is, seeing as after tonight everyone will know." Carter said meaningfully with a sly grin.

"Oh...what might we be finding out tonight?" The owner inquired in a very interested manner.

"That would be ruining the surprise, Mr. Docker." Carter said with a winning smile.

"Now, I'm even more eager for tonight." Mr. Docker said with a hint of excitement.

"I'll come see you in a week or so." Carter told him with a promise.

"I will be looking forward to it." Mr. Docker told him, as he finished up. He handed the packages to Tomas and Nick. "Do enjoy the game."

"It will be hard not to." Carter said, as they moved towards the exit. Tomas, Nick, and Blake nodded in agreement.

"I didn't know the Nimbus Company had dealings in Canada." Tomas commented, as they exited the hut.

"They've been trying to move business over here for years, but only recently got the official sign off for Canada's broomstick regulations and import rights." Carter told him, as they moved down the path between the different make shift shops. "I've been to several meetings with the Canadian Games Department Head, the Canadian Quidditch League Manager, and many broom shop owners in the last few weeks. The Nimbus will do well over here if people's interest is anything to go by. Though, there is heavy competition with the Winchester Company. They've been monopolizing the broom shops over here for years. They're the ones, who prevented the Nimbus Company from bring product over for so long."

"The Winchesters any good?" Nick inquired.

"They're good, but there are pros and cons with both brooms. I would say they are evenly matched, just depends on what a person needs in a broom." Carter said with a shrug. "The Winchesters are designed towards the keeper position. They have fast acceleration, quick braking, and excellent balance. However, in a race, the Nimbus would easily out match it. While they accelerate quickly, they are actually slower than the Nimbus. They are also balanced towards an overthrow of weight, good for quick turns and all that. The Nimbus has excellent balance as well, but is aimed at helping the rider keep control when they get jarred by a bludger or another player. The Nimbus is a good broom for a chaser or seeker. I would recommend the Winchester to a keeper, though."

"Hey, look." Blake said pointing to a stand selling Omnioculars. "Dad, can we get some?"

"We don't need them." Tomas told him. "Though, Nick and Carter might want a pair."

"Why don't we need them?" Blake asked with a confused look.

Tomas smiled and indicated his eyes. "Distance isn't the only thing we can see more clearly."

"Oh." Blake said in understanding.

They continued shopping for a while longer, before going back to their camp for lunch. Nick kept it to turkey sandwiches and crisps. As the day wore on and the sky got dark, the anticipation for the match grew even higher. Carter and Tomas had to argue with Blake to get him to actually eat a good dinner. He was simply too excited for what was to come. Eventually, it was almost time for the match. They all changed to warmer clothes and put on their merchandise to show support for the Romanian National Quidditch Team.

Blake wore his Dalca jersey over his coat. He had half his face painted dark blue and the other half painted violet. Tomas' face was painted in a similar manner and he wore a scarf in Romania's colors around his neck. Carter had on a silly hat that Blake picked out for him, and he let Blake paint his face with the Romanian colors. Nick wore a large pin on his jacket to show support, but refused to let Blake get anywhere near face with the paint.

After a long walk from the camp to the stadium, they climb an endless amount of stairs, before finally reaching their seats. Tomas had gotten them tickets to sit in one of the top boxes.

"Woow!" Blake exclaimed slowly, as he looked over the edge of the box and into the stadium. It was huge and lit up brightly. Many different ads flashed in the center of the field, advertising several different Canadian and world based companies. The place was packed full of thousands of people. Blake just marveled at it all.

"This a good enough birthday present for you?" Tomas asked, as he came to stand next to him.

Blake jumped in surprise, but grinned up at his father. "The best, I don't think you'll be able to outdo yourself in the future."

Tomas smiled widely. "Come sit down, the match will be starting soon enough."

"I hope Romania brought a dragon." Blake chirped, as he sat down next to Carter. Tomas sat on his other side with Nick next to him.

"Maybe a few baby dragons." Tomas told him.

"Even a baby dragon would be cool to see." Blake said excitedly.

"Welcome, ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the finals match of the 1990 Quidditch World Cup, the four hundred and twenty-first tournament!" A booming male voice said throughout the stadium.

An explosion of cheering and clapping came from the fans. Thousands of people showed their support by brandishing flags and shooting off colored sparks into the air. The advertisements that flashed in the center of the Quidditch field changed to show Peru; 0, Romania; 0. The cheers got even louder, as excitement and anticipation reached new heights.

"Without further delay, put your hands together for...the Peruvian National Team Mascots!" The voice said over all the noise in the stadium.

Blake leaned forward in his seat, as great, white, winged creatures swept into the stadium from the left. As he watched them, he realized they were large birds. Their wing span was absolutely enormous. The birds soared through the stadium radiating the feeling of new hope, a feeling that if you followed the great bird, everything would be just fine. The birds glided together in a dance like fashion. They spiraled around each other, as they dropped altitude into the stadium. Their trills rang through the huge arena, as they met together in the center of the pitch. Then suddenly, they flew up and away from each other. Soon enough they were gone.

"What were they?" Blake asked Tomas breathlessly, as cheers from those in yellow and orange broke the silence that had overcome the stadium when the birds entered.

"Those, my little knight, were the Great Albatrosses of the Southern Shores. They are the guardians of the seas, and guides to the sailors who lose their way." Tomas said with a smile. "To kill one is to bring great guilt and very bad luck down on yourself. It is unforgivable to spill their blood."

"And now give a grand welcome to...the Romanian National Team Mascots!"

Blake sat up straight instantly and eagerly scanned the skies. A light blue shield erected over the fans, and then off to the right hand side of the stadium flames erupted. Blake grinned madly, as three young dragons flew into the stadium. Each one had a keeper riding on their

backs. They flew through the arena letting off breaths of flame at their keeper's urgings. Blake watched in silent awe, his brain barely processing he was finally seeing a real live dragon. The dragons screeched and soared around riling up the Romanian fans. The three stopped spaced out and facing each other. They all shot off flames that met in the middle and exploded into a great fire ball. The fans in dark blue and purple lost it at this. The noise was absolutely deafening. The dragons shot off one more round of flames straight into the air and then excited the stadium. As soon as the young dragons were gone, the blue shield fell. Blake continued to yell at the top of his lungs. Tomas, Carter, and Nick were cheering along beside him.

"With much anticipation, I now introduce you to the Peruvian National Quidditch Team! – As keeper...Rodríguez! As chasers...Garcia! Guerrero! and Macías! As beaters...Molinero! and Vásquez! Aaaaaaand as seeker...Chávez! All riding on the not yet released Nimbus 1090! Expect to see this broom in stores soon!"

The crowd cheered madly, and with each name announced, a yellow and orange clad figure zoomed up into the air like a bullet. Blake watched wide eyed, as he tracked the fast movements easily. He admired their skill, as they flew in formation around the pitch. All of them were in perfect sync with each other.

"And for the opposition, I now introduce...the Romanian National Quidditch Team! – As keeper...Ionescu! As chasers...Cojocar! Funar! and Văduva! As beaters...Lupei! And Sala! Aaaaaaaaand as seeker...Dalca! All riding on the not yet released Nimbus 1090!"

Roars of applause and yells of support rang through the stadium with the introduction of each player. As their names were called, the dark blue and violet clad players took to the air. They circled around and preformed an impressive flight sequence. They were all in time with each other. Blake yelled excitedly, as he watched them. He yelled even louder, when they passed by the top boxes.

"Business is going to be good for you, my friend." Tomas said to Carter with a grin.

"Indeed it will be." Carter said smugly.

"And here, all the way from Japan, we have our referee this evening...representing the International Association of Quidditch – Hakaru Ito!"

A wizard dressed in gold took to the field carrying a large wooden chest and a broomstick. A silver whistle was clinched in his mouth. Ito mounted his broom. He took to the air, as he opened the chest with the tip of his foot. It was done in one swift and perfect movement. Four balls shot in the air with him. The red Quaffle, the two black Bludgers, and the golden Snitch all spun off in different directions. Ito blew the whistle loudly, upon reaching playing height.

"Let the game BEGIN! Funar takes first possession! To Văduva! Funar! Cojocarul! Funar! Intercepted by Macías! Guerrero! Garcia! Macías! Blocked by Cojocarul! Macías! Nice hit from Sala! Guerrero! Garcia shoots...and Ionescu blocks it! Văduva in possession! Funar!"

The commentator continued to shout out the plays. Blake watched the players fly through the air at insane speeds, passing the Quaffle back and forth, trying to find an opening. Blake cringed as Funar took a bludger to the back, courtesy of Molinero. The Peruvian players took possession and Romania went on the defensive once again. Blake noted that the players flew together in very apparent formations. Every move they made was precise and planned. He yelled support as Romania's chasers intercepted the Quaffle. They bypassed the opposing teams' chasers and rushed Peru's keeper.

"Funar! Văduva! Cojocarul! Văduva! He shoots and...IT'S GOOD! VĂDUVA SCORES! Ten; zero to Romania!"

Blake, Tomas, Nick, and Carter cheered loudly with the rest of the Romanian fans. The stadium was in absolute chaos, as the Romanian fans celebrated getting the first goal and the Peruvian fans booed in protest. Soon enough, everyone quieted down a bit and focused back on the intense game happening in front of them. Peru had possession and was headed for the Romanian end of the pitch. In seconds they answered back and the score was tied. A fierce battle erupted on the pitch, as the game continued on. With each goal Romania scored, Peru answered right back. Blake was on the edge of his seat and adrenalin was coursing through him in the exciting atmosphere. He watched the quick pace game, taking in everything he possibly could. The Quaffle went back and forth, from

one end of the pitch to the other. It was clear that both teams were a fairly matched. The Quaffle flew through the hoops, when the keepers couldn't get there fast enough. The chasers weaved and dodged not only the bludgers, but the opposing team's chasers as well. He booed and shouted protest when Vásquez nearly knocked Funar off his broom with a well placed bludger. There was no foul called, but Vásquez took a beating from Lupei. The Romanian beater sent a bludger aimed at the Peruvian beater's head, when he was only a few yards from him. Vásquez' shoulder took the hit, as he tried to avoid the menacing black ball. Romania did get a foul for that, and Macías made the penalty shot against Ionescu. By this time Peru was in the lead 110 to 90.

"Cojocarú! Funar! Cojocarú! In-ter-cept-ed byGuerrero! Garcia! Macías! Guerrero! Garcia! Macías! Guerrero! Garcia! Macías! They're just not going to give it up! Garcia! Guerrero! Garcia! Where is Macías going? Guerrero! Garcia! Guerrero! MACÍAS! HE SHOOT AND IT IS IN! 120 to 90 favoring Peru! What an amazing play! An ARROWS NEST!"

Blake sat in shocked, as did the rest of the crowd. Macías had helped push the Quaffle up the pitch only to stop and start climbing vertically. Garcia and Guerrero continued to attack towards the Romanian keeper. Then out of nowhere, Macías dove down between Garcia and Guerrero, intercepting the Quaffle as he did. Ionescu wasn't prepared for it, and Macías didn't even have to faint to send the Quaffle through the center hoop. The Peru fans were on their feet cheering loudly for the daring play. They were so busy cheering that they barely noticed Romania rushing the Peruvian keeper.

"FUNAR SCORES! 120; 100 to Peru! Garcia! Guerr – Funar! Cojocarú! Oooh that look like it hurt!" The commentator said, as Cojocarú took a bludger from Molinero. "Văduva! Cojocarú! Văduva! Funar! He takes the shot and...BLOCKED by Rodríguez!"

Blake booed loudly as Peru took possession of the Quaffle once again. Blake turned his attention to Dalca and Chávez. Both seekers were high in the sky and circling the pitch at a slow pace, when compared to the battle going on below them.

"See Chávez?" Tomas asked and pointed up to the yellow and orange clad flyer. Blake nodded. "See how he watches Dalca and

follows him?" Blake nodded again. "That's called marking the seeker. It is how a rookie seeker tries to keep the odds even when facing someone more experienced. Dalca is getting annoyed by it. We should see something from him soon."

"Shouldn't Chávez look for the snitch?" Blake asked. "That is what he is supposed to do."

Tomas chuckled. "Lupei shouldn't have tried to take off Vásquez's head either, but in Quidditch rules don't apply half the time. Dalca is good and Chávez knows it. If he took his eyes off Dalca, the snitch would be snatched right out from under his nose, before he could say otherwise. Chávez has the advantage when considering flying skills. He is a natural, but Dalca has a lot more training and knows what he is doing. Dalca took the snitch from the Irish seeker, Lynch, in the semi-finals, before the match even really got started. Lynch made the mistake of not marking Dalca and it cost him."

Blake continued to watch Dalca closely, waiting for him to make his move. He faintly heard the score reach 160 to 110 when Dalca dove.

"There goes Dalca! Chávez is on his tail!"

The crowd watched with baited breath as the two seekers dove.

"The snitch isn't there!" Blake yelled in shock, as Dalca continued for the ground with Chávez following. Dalca pulled out of the dive and shot back up only feet from the ground. Chávez wasn't so lucky. The end of his broom scraped the field, as he tried to come out of the dive. The momentum bucked him off and sent him rolling across the field.

"A faint by Dalca! And it looks like Peru is calling a time-out to check on their seeker!"

Ten minutes later the players were in the air once again. The game turned into a blood bath, as Peru took vengeance, and the Romanian beaters were having none of it. There were ten penalty shots in a matter of ten minutes. The score ended at 190 to 170 in favor of Peru. The game would come down to the seekers and both teams knew it. Chávez didn't let Dalca's trick shake him. Blake watched, as he continued to mark Dalca. Romania's beater started taking shots at Chávez to get him off Dalca's back. Peru's beaters

had to move in to take the defensive. With the switch up, the game turned into two violent battles. The chasers were doing a good enough job at taking each other out without the beaters help. The beaters stayed up with their seeker, trying to take the opposing team's seeker out and defend their own.

"Why I have never seen anything like this!" The commentator said, as the beaters and chasers did their best to knock each other out of the air. Ito gave up on calling every foul committed, after fifteen more penalties got called. The score now sat at 220 to 210 in favor of Peru.

Blake watched, bouncing in his seat, as the game continued on with a vicious intensity. He yelled protests, when Peru fouled Romania, and cheered, when Romania fouled Peru. He booed, when Peru scored, and whooped with glee, when Romania answered right back.

"DALCA!" The commentator shouted out startled, and the crowd turned their attention to the Romanian seeker.

Dalca was in a straight vertical dive. Chávez dove after him, trying to avoid the blugers Lupei and Sala sent his way. He was gaining on Dalca, and just when it looked like they were going to crash, Chávez pushed his broom into a vertical dive, and Dalca darted left out of the dive. He shot off for the far side of the stadium. Chávez realized his mistake, but it was too late. Dalca skidded to a stop, just before crashing into one of the Peru goal posts. In his hand was a fluttering golden snitch. The Romanian fans lost it. Blake had thought the cheers were deafening before, but it didn't compare in the slightest to the noise that erupted through the stadium.

"DALCA HAS THE SNITCH! 420 TO 290! ROMANIA WINS THE CUP!"

Blake yelled loudly at the announcement, and Romania took a victory lap around the pitch. Eventually the crowd began to settle a bit, as the two teams land on the field. Romania was already celebrating, as they limped over to the mediwizard. Peru looked a bit glum, but they were still in fairly high spirits, as they too made their way to medical station. Blake breathed out a long breath and collapsed back in his chair. All the adrenalin washed out of him. He felt like passing out.

"Wake up squirt." Carter said with an amused, but tired grin.

"What do you expect? It is 1:00 in the morning. The adrenalin was the only thing keeping him awake." Tomas said, brushing Carter away and picking Blake up. Blake clutched his arms around his father's neck and laid his head on his shoulder.

"When did the game start again?" Blake mumbled out sleepily.

"At 8:00. That was one of the longest and most vicious games I have ever watched." Nick said with a yawn, as he stood up and stretched.

Blake let his eyes fall close, as they began to make their way out of the stadium. He would have to get up in six hours, so they could take down camp and go home. He burrowed into his father, as the cold night air hit him, when they exited the stadium. He nodded in and out of consciousness, as his father carried him the long walk back to camp. Eventually, he was tucked under his father's sleeping bag. His father let him snuggle up to him for more warmth. He wrapped an arm around him as he kissed the top of his head goodnight. Blake didn't care that the ground was hard tonight. He was just too tired, and the day had been one of the best of his life.

"I love you, Dad." Blake murmur out, before sleep consumed him fully.

—

Later that morning, but still way too early in Blake's opinion, they all had to get up. Nick and Carter served a quick breakfast, and then they set to taking down camp. Blake wasn't required to do much, as the men had took pity on him. They were fine with six hours of sleep, but Blake was used to getting a good nine, if not ten or eleven, hours a night. Blake collected the tent stakes and dumped the water out of the ice chest. He picked up the garbage around their site and burnt it in the fire. They had a brief lunch, before they finished packing up what was still left lying about. By the time they got done, the only evidence that they were there were the cooling embers of the fire.

"We have a surprise for you, Blake." Carter said happily, as they got the last of the supplies packed away.

"What?" Blake asked with a yawn, as he set down his duffle-bag next to the small pile of things they brought.

Carter grinned widely and shot a look to Tomas. His father came up behind him and covered his eyes with his hands.

"Now that would ruin your surprise." Tomas said conspiratorially. "Nick, can you handle all this stuff?"

"No problem, it's not like I made an oath not to use magic." Nick said in a smug tone.

"After all this, you're going to cheat." Tomas tsked.

"Goodbye, Tomas. You'll love your surprise, Blake. Carter, make sure the two idiots make it home okay." Nick said with laughter in his voice.

"Hey!" Tomas and Blake protested.

"Come on, I said 12:30." Carter said, taking Blake's hand and pulling him forward.

Blake followed cautiously. His father kept his hands firmly placed over his eyes, and Carter led him to wherever they were going. They walked for a while, and then he heard a door being opened and his feet fell on stone instead of a dirt path. He was lead down a small flight of stairs and through another couple of doors. He heard talking in what he recognized to be the Romanian language. His heart jumped in nervousness and excitement for where Carter and his father were taking him.

"Surprise!" Tomas and Carter said, as his father removed his hands.

Blake took in where he was in shock. They were in an observation area. There was a huge window wall that showed where the three young dragons he saw last night were being kept and taken care of. Lounging on sofas in the corner of the room was the entire Romanian National Quidditch Team.

"You are Blake, yes?" Dalca asked standing up. The man's green eyes were kind, as he approached him. Blake had to quickly shake off his shock, as Dalca stood in front of him only seconds later.

"I am Blake Alexander. It is a pleasure to meet you." Blake said politely, holding out his hand. Dalca shook it amusedly.

"Eugen Dalca, and I know who you are Young Knight." Dalca whispered the last part quietly in a thick Romania accent. "It is an honor to meet you. Your father saved my life a few years ago, you know."

Blake was slightly taken aback, but grinned up at Dalca. He glanced at his father out the corner of his eye.

"Come, meet the rest of the team." Dalca said and beckoned him to follow him over to the team. Blake walked beside him and over to the couches. His father and Carter remained by the door. "Blake, meet Emanuel Funar, Răzvan Sala, Silvia Cojocaru, Cătălina Ionescu, Vasile Văduva, and Octavian Lupei."

Blake shook each ones hand, and they gave him a polite greeting in return.

"Your father tells me you wish to be a seeker." Dalca commented, as he sat down on one of the sofas. He made room for Blake to sit next to him.

"What can I say? I'm a bit reckless on a broom." Blake said grinning. He couldn't believe he was sitting in a room with the Romanian National Quidditch Team and had an amazing view of three baby dragons while doing it. "Congratulations on winning the Cup. You all played remarkably."

They nodded in acknowledgement with victorious grins on their faces. Each gave verbal appreciation for the compliment.

Blake turned to Dalca excitedly. "That fake dive you did last night was amazing. I cannot believe Chávez continued to mark you after that."

"Ah...yes, that would be a Wronski Faint." Dalca told him happily.

"Your father, he says you are a natural on a broom." Văduva said with a smile. "Quite rare for such talent."

Their conversation remained on Quidditch. The Romanians were more than eager to give him flying tips. They also shared many stories about their personal experience in the air and the many different games they had played in. Blake took it all in with enthusiasm and told them about flying with his father. The team seemed impressed by the skill he revealed having. It was uncommon for someone his age to already be flying on a real broom, but it was even more uncommon for them to already be doing dittos and fast break dives. They ended up talking for a good hour.

"Would you like to go out and meet the dragons?" Dalca asked, when Ionescu got finished telling a story about her first time on a broom.

"I can do that?" Blake asked surprised. This just kept getting better and better.

Dalca nodded. "But, first things first." He pulled an International Standard Snitch out of his pocket. He handed it to Blake. Blake immediately took note that it had all of the team member's signatures on it.

"Wow!" Blake said and looked up at the team. "Thank you all so much. I really appreciate this."

"It is nothing." Dalca dismissed. "Your father, I cannot repay him for what he did for me."

Blake nodded, but secretly wondered what exactly his father had done for Dalca. He wondered how his father saved his life, and why Dalca's life needed saving to begin with.

"Come, meet the beasts." Dalca said getting up. He led him through a side door that exited into the dragon pin. Blake smiled at his father, who had quickly followed them out. He got a grin in return. Blake looked back for Carter, but saw him still standing behind the glass. He looked less than eager to get any closer.

Blake returned his attention to his father and the dragons, as his father introduced him to Roman Kovar, a wizard from the Czech

Republic. It turned out the man owed his father a favor as well. His father had helped him subdue a nesting Hungarian Horntail, who was bothering a muggle village in Croatia. His father clearly left out a few facts yesterday, when he told him about it. Blake knew nesting dragons were the deadliest dragons out there, and on top of that, the Hungarian Horntail breed was already pretty deadly.

Blake listen to Roman give a brief speech about how they handled the baby dragons and about what each one required, as they were different breeds. They had brought a Common Welsh Green, a Hungarian Horntail, and a Romanian Longhorn for the match. Roman informed them that they had two other young dragons back on the reserve in Romania, a Ukrainian Ironbelly, and a Swedish Short-Snout.

"This one is actually one of your dragon's offspring, Tomas." The man said, as they passed by the young Hungarian Horntail. "In a few years, she will be nesting herself."

Blake got permission to pet the young Common Welsh Green, when they came over to it. He couldn't believe he was actually allowed to touch a dragon. Not to mention, having Eugen Dalca right next to him, as he did it. Dalca seemed just as excited as he was about being allowed near the dragons. The man grinned at him, while they softly stroked the dragon's scales.

"They are tame and manageable, when they are young." Roman told them and scratched the dragon's snout. "However, once they reach adulthood, they become rather difficult, as their skin becomes resistant to our spells."

Eventually, Blake had to bid the dragons, Roman, and the Romanian National Quidditch Team goodbye.

"It was a pleasure. Carter, the broom was amazing. The best I have ever flown." Dalca told them, as he walked them out of the building that the Romanian National Quidditch Team was staying in. At the door, he bid them all fair well.

Blake bounced with happiness, as they set off on the path back to camp and the designated portkey field. He couldn't believe the last few weeks he had. Touring Canada had been great, the World Cup

was amazing, but getting to meet the Romanian National Quidditch Team and their dragons was the best thing yet.

"Ready to go home?" Tomas asked his son, while beaming down at him.

"I think I've had enough excitement for a little while." Blake nodded in agreement. He let the excitement of the last few hours slowly leave him, so he wouldn't drive his father and Carter nuts. There was something he wanted to know though. "How'd you save Dalca's life?"

"That would be a story not meant for your young ears." Tomas told him with a heavy sigh. "He found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and got taken as a hostage. That is as much as I will tell you."

"Let's go home. I could really use a nap." Blake said with a yawn. He figured he wouldn't get a real answer. He never did.

"You're not the only." Carter said in agreement looking fairly tired.

After a minute or so more, they reached the portkey field. Tomas took a glass bottle from the station witch, after giving her their destination. Blake and Carter reached out to the glass bottle in Tomas' hand. As soon as they made contact with it, the world spun into a swirl of colors.

Eeeep! I got many, many review with my last post and that made me very, very happy. Not only do I want you to review, but I have a poll on my profile for which HOGWARTS HOUSE Blake should be in. So please vote for that. I want to see where my readers think Blake should be.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(4); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn(3); Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntIt; Arsao Tome; call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD(2); Kayls Cullen(3); KoniK47(2); SuperiorShortness(3);farwalker(2); Wondering Hail; Canuto-90; phantombrick; spacecatdet; verox29(3); twilightserius; Teufel1987;

Graves – October 1990

Blake woke, as he felt a hand shake his shoulder. His groggy brain faintly registered a weight sink into the mattress at the edge of his bed. The hand shook his shoulder again. Blake wished the person would leave him alone. He was still tired, and it felt too early to be getting up. He rolled away from the person and groaned in protest, but the hand caught his shoulder, preventing his escape.

"...to get up." A male voice cut through his semiconscious mind. He felt the weight shift, as someone leaned over him. The hand shook him again. "Come on, Blake, you need to get up."

Blake blinked his eyes open, recognizing his father's voice. He rolled on to his back and looked up into his father's face. The room was pitch-black, but he could still see perfectly. He knew for sure now that it was too early for him to be getting up. His father gave him a smile at seeing him awake.

"What's going on?" Blake asked sleepily. He really hoped that his father wasn't here to tell him that he was leaving again. He had only gotten back a few days ago from wherever he went for four days. He looked around the room and didn't see Carter, so that was a good sign that this might be about something else.

"There are a few places we need to visit, and for one of them we absolutely cannot be seen. Therefore, we need to go now, while most of the world is still asleep." Tomas told him with a slightly sad air. "So, get up and get dressed. I expect you down stairs for breakfast in a half hour."

"What time is it?" Blake asked, as he pushed himself into a sitting position and rubbed his eyes. Personally, he really wanted to go back to sleep.

"3:00 am." Tomas answered.

Blake groaned and flopped back into the bed. He yanked the covers over his head. "Come back in a few more hours."

Tomas shook his head. He really hoped Blake wouldn't fight with him this morning, but apparently he would have no such luck. He

ripped back the blankets covering his son's head. Blake fought against him and tried to pull them back over his body.

"Go away! It's too early." Blake whined. He started to move to the other side of the bed, so he could get back under the covers.

"Blake, please." Tomas requested, as he ran a hand over his face. He really wasn't in the mood for this. He hoped today would be the end of Blake's tantrums.

"NO!" Blake yelled and snuggled back under the blankets once again. "I'm still tired. I'm not getting up at no 3:00 in the morning."

Tomas clenched his teeth in frustration. He reached across the bed and grabbed his stubborn son. He pulled him out from under the covers and right out of the bed. Blake fought him, as he dragged him into a standing position. As soon as Tomas let go of him, he tried to climb back on the bed, but Tomas picked him up around the middle with an exasperated sigh.

"NO! I'm up! I'm up!" Blake yelled, as he realized where his father was taking him. He tried even harder to get away.

Tomas ignored all the slaps and kicks he received, as he carried Blake out of his bedroom. He set his son down on the cold stone floor, when they reached their destination and then pushed him in the shower. He turned the faucet to cold, and Blake yelped, as the water hit him. Tomas turned it off after ten seconds. Blake gave him a glare. He was completely soaked. His pajamas and hair clung to him sopping wet.

"Now you're up." Tomas declared.

"I hate you." Blake bit out. Tomas looked a bit shocked, but he quickly brushed it off.

"I love you. Now, get ready. You have a half hour." Tomas told him, before leaving the bathroom. He shut the door softly behind him.

Blake growled and tore off his soaking wet clothes, depositing them on the bathroom floor. He turned the shower on warm. Sometimes, his father really got on his nerves. Three o'clock in the morning, what was he thinking?

A half hour later, Blake sat himself down in his spot next to his father at the long alabaster table, in the grand dining room. A bowl of porridge and a side of fruit was waiting for him, as was a glass of milk and the orange vitalizing potion.

"Good morning." Tomas greeted cheerfully, as he watched his son sit down.

"Yes, a lovely a morning." Blake said dryly.

"You can't stay mad at me all day, so just get over it." Tomas told him conversationally.

Blake glared, but it was halfhearted, and therefore ineffective. He could never stay mad at his father, no matter how hard he tried. He sighed in defeat and took a bite of porridge.

"I'm sorry that I said I hated you." Blake said genuinely, after a few minutes of silence had stretched between them. He looked slightly guilty, as he met his father's gaze. "I didn't mean it."

"I know." Tomas said with a soft smile. He reached out to ruffle Blake's hair.

They finished up breakfast and then went to the entrance hall. Tomas had Blake put on a warm muggle coat. He slipped a stock hat on his head and gave him gloves to put on as well. He then put on his own coat, hat, and gloves. Blake wasn't sure where they were going, but the elves had set out jeans and a jumper for him, so he knew it was going to be some place in the muggle world. He also figured that they would be spending some time outside, since Tomas wanted his so wrapped up. He took his father's hand when beckoned, and then he felt, as if he was being compressed through a tiny tube.

Seconds later, cold morning air assaulted his face. He looked around the area they had apparated into. He noted that they were standing at the entrance to a cemetery. There was a small village off in the distance. Only the faint glow of the moon through the clouds provided any form of light, as not even one lamp was lit in the darkness. Blake looked up at his father curiously. His father didn't answer his unspoken question. He just led him through the kissing

gate. Blake read the names on the headstones they passed. There were names such as Abbot, Dumbledore, and several others he recognized as belonging to old wizarding families. When he read the names on the headstone they were approaching, his breath caught and he stopped walking. Written into the stone, side by side, were the names James Potter and Lily Potter. Beneath the recordings of their birth and death dates were the words 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' His father squeezed his hand reassuringly.

"I thought it would be appropriate to visit them today, it being Halloween and all." Tomas said quietly.

Blake tentatively let go of his father's hand and walked closer to the grave of his birth parents. He sat down on the frosty grass in front of the headstone. He slowly traced the letters of their names. Tears came to his eyes. It all felt more real. He knew that they had to exist, that they were alive at one point in time. There were recordings of their achievements during their school years in Hogwarts, A History. Nick had told him stories, from when James was assigned to his squad fresh out of the Auror Academy. James made a fool out of himself on his first day by letting the bad guy get the drop on him. 'A rookie mistake.' Nick had said with a huge grin. He had told him about meeting his mother at a Ministry function for the DMLE. Those were just recorded fact and stories though. To see their names carved into stone, as an everlasting monument to their lives, it just made them seem so much more real.

Blake knew that they had loved him. They loved him so much that they had die for him. They left him alone in the world, but they had made sure to the best of their ability that he would live. Blake couldn't remember them. He couldn't remember their faces, their voices, or anything really. All he had was a faint memory in the form of a nightmare. He wished he could remember. Sobs escaped his lips, and within seconds, he was pulled into his father's lap. His father wrapped his arms around him comfortingly. Through his sorrow, Blake recognized that for the first time in his life, he was in the presence of all three of his parents. He turned and burrowed into his father's chest, as he cried. He felt his father's hand run soothing up in down his back.

"They loved you so much, Blake. I know that they would be very proud of who you have grown to be." Tomas said quietly in Blake's ear and continued to sooth him the best he could. He held him close

and whisper small reassurances to him. Blake just clung to him, tears falling down his cheeks and quiet sobs shaking his frame.

Blake let out his sorrow and pain at not knowing the ones who gave him life, not only once, but twice. He cried for their sacrifice to save him, for the loneliness he had felt in their absence while at the Dursley's, and for the love that his father gave him in their place. Eventually, he quieted, but he didn't move to leave his father's lap. He gazed back at the grave and rested his head on his father's shoulder.

"Thank you for bring me to see them." Blake said in a quiet, but very sincere voice.

"I should have brought you years ago, but – " Tomas began.

"I know, my Occlumency." Blake interrupted in understanding.

"No, it was not your Occlumency, Blake. My reason is a very selfish one." Tomas told him guiltily. "When I first laid eyes on you, when Nick brought you to me, I knew you would be my son. In that moment, I began to love you. As I spoke with you, I could see you were exactly everything that I would want in an heir. You were fairly polite, yet you were bold and determined as well. Then you let me adopt you, not only legally, but also by blood and magic. You truly became mine that night, and I couldn't have been happier. You are my son, and I don't like sharing you. I love that you call me father. I love that you willingly accept me for that role in your life. I know that I cannot replace James and Lily. You belonged to them first. I am just lucky I can call you mine now."

Tomas paused and gazed to the headstone before him. "That first Halloween...Nick told me to bring you here, but I worried that you would turn away from me, if I did, that you wouldn't give me your love so willingly anymore. I was selfish. I chose to keep you to myself. However, I realize now that James and Lily are a part of you. I cannot keep you from them. You have every right to visit their grave. You have every right to call them Mum and Dad. It is not my right to tell you that you can't."

Blake turned and looked at his father. He studied his father's guilt ridden and sorrowful face. "Dad, I love you. You are my father. Don't ever doubt that. They..." Blake gestured to the grave. "...may have

given me life, but you are the one who is here now. They can't hug me. They can't reassure me everything will be fine, when clearly everything is not. They can't wish me goodnight or good morning. They cannot tell me they love me. That is your job. You are as much my father as James Potter is, if not more. I am Blake Alexander Knight, and I want to be Blake Alexander Knight. I am your son, forever."

Tomas hugged him tightly to him and kissed the top of his head. "I love you so much, my little knight."

Tomas held Blake close to him for a while, but the sorrow never completely left his eyes. Eventually, he released Blake, and Blake got up out of his lap. Tomas got up as well. He hung back slightly, as Blake stepped forward to stand before the Potter's headstone and pay his respects.

"I love you and miss you. I don't remember much, but I do know you loved me too. I wish I could remember. I wish I could know all about you. I know you were Perfect and Head Girl, Mum. I also know that you got the top scores every year at Hogwarts. Nick said he met you and that he had never talked to a nicer person. He said you were special. He told me that I remind him of you at times.

"Dad, I know that you were the Captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch Team for two years, and played in the chaser position for six. My dad he is teaching me to play seeker. He says I'm a natural on a broom, just like you. We went to the World Cup a couple months ago. I got to meet the Romanian National Quidditch Team. It was awesome. Hogwarts, A History says that you were Head Boy, and that you weren't a slacker in school either. Nick told me you made a good Auror. He said you saved a lot of lives in the short year that he knew you."

Blake stepped closer and rested a hand on the headstone as he continued to speak.

"You don't have to worry anymore. I'm okay. Dad has me now. He is a good man. He loves me with his whole heart. I think...if you were to meet him, you would really like him. I have Carter too. He's kind of like a big brother to me. And Nick, well you both met him, I have him as well. He's like my granddad. It's a good thing he's around. He has

to keep us all in line. Well...I guess I should say goodbye. I'll come back and visit again, I promise."

After a few seconds pause, he stepped back and moved away from his birth parents' grave. He watched, as his father stepped up and bent down to kiss the headstone. His father whispered so quietly, that he almost missed it. "Thank you, Lily and James, for your son. I am so sorry you could not be the ones to watch him grow. I promise to continue to do my best for your Harry. May you rest in peace, Lady Lily. May you be happy in death, Sir James."

Tomas stood back up and walked over to Blake. He smiled down at him and Blake smiled back. Blake took his hand and followed him out of the cemetery. In his focus on his parents' grave, he didn't even notice the headstone a little ways away from theirs that read Harry Potter. The two Knights exited the kissing gate of the cemetery, and Tomas led Blake into the village.

"This is Godric's Hallow. This is where you were born." Tomas informed Blake. He led him down one of the various avenues as he continued. "It is named for Godric Gryffindor. Then again, I'm sure you've already read all about it."

Blake nodded in response. He had read about it a while ago.

When they got to the center of the village, his father brought him to stand before an old war memorial. When they approached it, Blake watched, as the obelisk morphed into a statue of three people. There was a man with messy hair. Adorning his face were a pair of glasses and a smile. Next to him was a beautiful woman with long hair. Her face was kind, and in her arms was a baby boy. Blake looked at the man and woman closely. He knew exactly who they had to be. They were his birth parents, James and Lily Potter. The man's hair reminded him of how his used to be. His face was so similar to the one he used to have. He saw that he still had the man's slightly rounded jaw line, and the shape of the woman's eyes was an exact match to his.

"You looked so much like James." Tomas commented, as he too took in statue. "I can still find parts of their faces in yours, you know?"

"I have his jaw, and my eyes are like my mothers." Blake said in agreement, while his eyes remained transfixed on the statue.

"Not exactly like hers. They used to be. You used to have such bright emerald eyes. Nick said it was like seeing Lily all over again." Tomas told him reminiscently. "It is probably a good thing that they changed. You'd be recognizable if they stayed green."

"I like my eye color how it is now. It makes me like you." Blake said brightly and looked up at his father. "You have much better hair, too. I'm glad I'm no longer cursed with such a messy mop."

"Your hair is still slightly messy, but it is manageable at least." Tomas said with a slight chuckle. "Come, there is one more thing you need to see before we leave."

Blake walked beside him, as they began to move through the dark avenues once again. The sky was only beginning to show a hint of lightness to it. They walked past several shops, and eventually, started heading out of the village.

Several cottages lined the lane they were walking on. Blake could see the end, where the small houses stopped and became replaced with open countryside. His father kept walking, so he continued to follow him. It wasn't until they got closer, that he noticed their destination. At the end of all the cottages was one in particular. It stood in partial ruins, contrasting against the others along the lane. The hedges had grown up around it, and the ivy had overtaken the exterior. For the most part, it was still standing, but at the top right, there was a hole blown out of what would have been the second floor.

"T-this is where it happened, isn't it?" Blake asked shakily, as he stepped up to the gate of the cottage. "This used to be my home."

"Yes, this is the house you were born in. This is the house you lived in for a year and three months with your parents." Tomas answered soberly. He rested a comforting hand on his son's shoulder, as he stepped up beside him. He reached out with the other hand to touch the gate.

Blake watched, as a sign rose up out of the ground. He quietly read the words. It was a commemoration to the Potters and the events

that occurred on Halloween of 1981. Though he appreciated the sentiment, he came to realize that his father was completely right. He had told him, back when they first met, that the wizarding world had taken a tragic event and turned it into something to host parties for and celebrate. He told him that Harry Potter was idolized throughout Britain's wizarding population for surviving the killing curse. All the side notes written on the sign were evidence of this. Blake turned away from the house and looked up at his father.

"Why'd you bring me here?" He asked him flatly. "For two and a half years you've avoided seriously addressing the topic of my birth parents and my birth name. Why'd you suddenly change your mind?"

"How about we head home?" Tomas suggested. Blake looked ready to protest about not getting answers to his questions. However, Tomas spoke again, before he could even open his mouth. "I will answer you, Blake, but not here."

"Let's go then." Blake said determined, and took hold of his father's hand.

They were in the entrance hall of Knight Mansion seconds later. Both removed their coats, hats, and gloves. Tomas called one of the elves for tea and had Blake follow him into the sitting room. Instead of sitting in his armchair, he sat down on the couch next to Blake. Blake turned to him with an expectant look.

"Blake." Tomas started, while pinning his son with an intense look. "I love you more than anything in the world. I would give you anything within my power to give, all you have to do is ask for it. However, you've never attempted to bring up James and Lily with me. You've never seemed to want to actually discuss them or your old name with me. Though, today is proof that it is something that has been bothering you, and it is something that should be addressed. You're curious about them, and that is fine. It is natural to want to know where you come from. I sincerely hope that today gave you some of the answers you were seeking. I do admit that I was being selfish about it, and I willingly ignored the issue. That was a mistake on my part. Blake, I'm not perfect, and I will never claim to be.

"You asked me what changed. Well, what changed is that I have come to realize just because you want to ignore something and not

discuss it with me openly doesn't mean that I can ignore it as well." Tomas said with a heavy sigh. "Blake, you have been very honest with me, and I try to be honest with you. I like when you bring your worries to me. I don't like when you hide things from me. I don't want to have to force a conversation on you. I would prefer if you came to me with your concerns, desires, and whatever else that may occupy your mind.

"Son, I honestly didn't even know you were so concerned with who James and Lily were, not until Nick brought it up to me a few months ago. For years, you haven't seemed very interested in wanting to know a lot about them. You seemed fine, but lately you've been agitated and short tempered." Tomas said carefully. "Blake, I know there is more to this than you just wanting to know more about James and Lily. I wish you would talk to me, son. I told you that you could tell me anything, no matter what. I've asked you repeatedly, in the last few months, if there was anything you wanted to discuss – "

"There isn't anything else I want to discuss!" Blake interrupted automatically, in a forceful tone.

"Yes there is, son." Tomas said seriously. "Why is it, recently, that you have fought so much against me?"

Blake crossed his arms and looked away from him.

"Do you resent me?" Tomas asked him with a sorrowful expression. He pulled Blake's face around, so he was looking him in the eyes. "I know love me, but do you resent me? Do you regret let me adopt you? You said this morning you hated me. That has basis somewhere."

"I don't hate you." Blake said in a small voice. "I don't regret becoming your son."

"Then what is bothering you so much?" Tomas asked him with a heavy sigh.

"May I go to my room?" Blake asked stiffly.

"No, you may not go to your room." Tomas said in a clipped tone.

"I don't want to talk about this!" Blake nearly yelled.

"What is really bothering you?" Tomas pressed.

"You already seem to know, so why should I tell you?" Blake challenged in a vicious tone.

"I don't know what exactly is bothering you. I know the main concern, but I don't really know what the problem is." Tomas said seriously. His intense gaze burned into Blake's narrowed eyes. "Blake, you are not going to get what you want unless you man up and ask for it."

"I DON'T WANT TO ASK FOR IT! I WON'T ASK THAT OF YOU!" Blake yelled. "YOU GIVE ME EVERYTHING AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE THE REASON YOU EXPOSE THE KNIGHT NAME TO THE WIZARDING WORLD ONCE AGAIN! I'M NOT GOING TO BE THE ONE TO PUT US IN DANGER! NOT FOR SOMETHING AS STUPID AS WANTING TO GO TO HOGWARTS!"

Once he finished yelling, he collapsed back into the couch. There were unshed tears in his eyes. He looked away from his father and into the fire. Tomas sat back as well, slightly shocked. Silence stretch between them. After a minute, the elf brought in their tea. Tomas recomposed himself, and prepared the tea in silence. Blake accepted his cup, but didn't meet his father's eyes. He knew better than to yell at his father, and he just yelled a whole lot.

"Blake, for starts, wanting to go to Hogwarts is not stupid. Wanting to walk the halls, where your father and mother made such a mark, is far from being stupid. Wanting to be around kids your own age and to learn magic with them is not unreasonable." Tomas said in a composed, gentle tone. Blake was internally shocked at not getting an immediate reprimand for shouting at his father. "What is stupid and unreasonable, is to think that I would do something that I don't want to do, or that I would do something that is against my better judgment. For what is coming in the future, we cannot hide behind a smoke screen. Blake, the Knight name will be known to the wizarding world once again, even if you decided that you do not want to go to Hogwarts."

Blake finally looked up at his father. His eyes held many questions, as he locked gazes with him. His father's face seemed tired, almost as if he were exhausted. Blake had noted that he seemed

exhausted a lot lately. He knew that he was part of the cause for his father's exhaustion.

"Blake, the reason I wanted you to come to me, and ask me if you could go to Hogwarts, was because I want you to be able to talk to me about anything." Tomas told him seriously, as his eyes remained locked with his own. "I want you to feel like you can come to me. I hate that we've fought for two months about this. I hate that I had to force you to sit down with me and discuss this. Blake, I seriously didn't know you had an interest in Hogwarts. I only found out, when I overheard Nick and Carter discussing it at the World Cup. You didn't tell me about wanting to know more about James and Lily. You didn't tell me about wanting to go to Hogwarts. You didn't talk to me about any of it. I've been in the dark trying to figure out what was wrong. You just kept fighting me about every little damn thing.

"Son, what am I supposed to do? How am I suppose to fix something, if you won't tell me what there is to fix? How can I help you, if you don't tell me that something is bothering you? I don't want you to hide from me, Blake. I don't like, and quite frankly, it scares me. Not knowing of what is truly going on with you. It scares the life out of me."

Blake tore his gaze away from his father and looked down into his lap. He took a few shaky breaths. He felt his father gently run his hand up and down his back, and he appreciated the comfort. He was relieved that his father did seem to be mad about any of it. Though, the look on his father's face as he spoke to him, tore at him worse, than if he had outright yelled at him for being such a brat lately. He could see that his father was truly concerned, worried, and hurt. Still, the strongest emotion of all was love. He could see how much his father loved him. It was as plain as day in the man's midnight blue eyes. After settling his wayward emotions, he looked back up at his father and swallowed hard.

"I'm sorry for everything. I'm sorry I worried you, hurt your feelings, and made you think I hated you. I'm sorry I lied and said I was fine, when I wasn't. I'm sorry that I didn't come to you and talk to you." Blake bit his lip and blinked back tears. "I so sorry, I didn't mean to."

Tomas pulled him into a hug. "Shhh...I know, Blake. I know you didn't mean to. I'm sorry as well. As I said, part of this was a mistake on my part. If you want to go to Hogwarts, you can. The Knight

name will be brought back into the wizarding world no matter if you go or not."

"I want to go." Blake affirmed, as he hugged his father tightly. For a second time that day, tears found their way onto his cheeks. He remained in his father's arms, until he was able to regain control. He pulled back and looked up at Tomas' face. "Dad?"

"Yeah?" Tomas asked with a raise eyebrow. Blake noted that he didn't seem so tired anymore.

"Thanks, I love you for always." Blake told him. He then leaned up to kiss his father's cheek.

"I love you for always as well." Tomas said with a smile, but a few seconds later, his face took on a serious look. "However, you need to go get dressed in your gym shorts. You're doing double laps and running the Course twice. I don't appreciate dragging your butt out of bed, nor do I appreciate being slapped and kicked while doing it. I also don't appreciate all the disrespect or all the yelling."

"You're letting me off easy." Blake commented morosely, as he got up.

"You think so?" Tomas inquired with a bit of familiar amusement in his eyes.

"Uh...nope, that punishment sounds just fine." Blake said, realizing what exactly he had just told his father. He gave a quick innocent smile, and then dashed out of the room, before his father could change his mind.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! I love the support. I love the reviews, the favorites, the alerts, the C2s. Remember I like hearing your opinions and what you think so please drop a review. Also, if you haven't, please vote in the poll on my profile for Blake's HOGWARTS HOUSE. The results so far are: Ravenclaw – 5; Slytherin – 4; Gryffindor – 4; Hufflepuff – 3.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(5); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn(4); Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntIt; Arsao Tome;

call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD(2); Kayls Cullen(4); KoniK47(2);
SuperiorShortness(3);farwalker(3); Wondering Hail; Canuto-90;
phantombrick(2); spacecatdet; verox29(3); twilightserius;
Teufel1987(2); agouraki; Masterjedi1979; noodle-monster;
fhippogriff;

The Knights Are Back – May 1991

HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY APPLICATION FORM

Full Name: Blake Alexander Knight
Date of Birth: August 1st, 1980
Time of Birth: Early Morning
Gender: Male
Place of Birth: South West England

Father: Tomas Isaiah Knight, Lord of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Knight
Mother: Deceased

Blood Status: Pureblood
Official Status: Heir of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Knight
Financial Status: Higher-Upper Class
Political Status: Neutral

Current Residence: East Wales
Current Education Level: Complete through Year 8 – Welsh-Writing, Welsh-Reading, English-Writing, English-Reading, Mathematics, and World Culture; Completely fluent speech – English, Welsh, Irish, French, Bulgarian, and Latin; Reasonable background in major events of muggle and magical history; Reasonable background in beginners magical theory and beginners potions theory.

"Uh...Dad..." Blake said hesitantly, from his chair across from his father.

"What?" Tomas asked, as he looked up from his work. He set his quill down on his desk and peered at Blake.

"You want me to put a drop of blood on this, magically validating that everything written is the truth?" Blake asked seriously. He looked down at the application form once again. He shook his head. There were three blatant lies and four places where the truth was only skimmed.

"That is what I said." Tomas agreed positively. There was a small amount amusement playing on his lips and in his eyes.

"My birthday isn't on August 1st. I was born late at night on July 31st. I was born in Godric's Hollow of South West England. While you are my father, my birth father is James Potter. My birth mother is Lily Potter. Though, I do admit they are both deceased, leaving you as my only current parent. Then there is the fact that I'm not completely of Pureblood. Technically, I'm of mixed-blood. Lastly, we live in the Black Mountains of Southeast Wales." Blake said with a pointed look. "How can I magically validate such lies?"

Tomas laughed at the disgruntled look on Blake's face. Blake gave him a glare in response and crossed his arms in front of his chest.

"None of it is a lie, Blake." Tomas said reassuringly, after recomposing himself. "Well, not technically, at any rate."

"I was not born – " Blake started, but quieted as his father held up his hand. It was a clear sign for him to stop and listen.

"No one can pin down when exactly you were born." Tomas told him seriously. "There is a time window that prevents it. Time of birth is judged, by when a baby's magic breaks the connection to its mother and manifests entirely on its own. The process for this takes time, which creates a time window in the testing for someone's moment of birth. Sometime during the created time window the baby is actually born. If someone were to give you a test to find out when you were born, the results would be that you were born sometime between late night July 31st of 1980 and early morning August 1st of 1980. If you say you were born on August 1st, then you were born on August 1st, and no one will be able to say otherwise."

"Why does my birthday have to be changed?" Blake asked curiously. Tomas could see through the front. He could see that Blake didn't like the situation one bit. "I don't look like Harry anymore. Everyone thinks Harry is dead. It isn't so farfetched that we might coincidentally have the same birthday. Besides, how can you be sure of my time window?"

"I can be sure of your time window, because I have tested you for it. The day Nick brought you to me, I tested you with every medical test there is, so that I could get a full account of your medical history. It is very possible that you could have been born on August 1st. Your word is the only thing that will contradict it as the truth. When asked, I will say that August 1st is your day of birth. Nick and Carter have

agreed to do the same." Tomas said in a severe tone. "Blake, this is to protect you. Albus Dumbledore is a very smart man. If you give him any small truth about something you want to hide, he can find out your secret, before you are even aware your secret is in jeopardy."

"My birthday is all I have left." Blake said pleadingly. "It is all I have of being Harry Potter. Please, don't make me give that up."

"Son, you have to." Tomas said with a small amount of remorse. "July 31st cannot be your birthday, at least not to the public. For us to become known to the wizarding world, nothing can lead back to you being Harry Potter."

"Okay." Blake reluctantly agreed. "What about my blood status?"

"My blood is pure. James' blood was pure. Lily's blood was of muggle decent. As you know, there isn't any real difference between a Pureblood and a Muggleborn when considering magical ability." Tomas said carefully, while looking at Blake calculatingly. He sighed and then folded his hands together on top of the desk. "You asked several times before, if there is a difference between a Pureblood and a Muggleborn. I've always told you that you would have that answer, when you were old enough to truly understand that there is no difference. Son, I think you're old enough."

Blake perked up and listened attentively. This was something that his father had withheld from him for a very long time. His father had raised him on the principle that blood didn't matter. However, he knew that there had to be some difference, or his father would have answered the question, when he asked it three years ago.

"What 'determines' if a person is of Pureblood, or not, is if there is a detectable trace of two old magics within them. Mine and James' family magics have been passed down for centuries. Lily's magic was of new birth. You are considered a Pureblood. Knight and Potter magic run through you." Tomas said seriously. He had Blake pinned with a very intense gaze. "How the old magics are detected is by taste, or so you could put it. Magic is sort of similar to wine. The magic only gets better and more potent with age. That doesn't mean it cannot be good, when it is fresh and new." Tomas added quickly, as he saw something flicker in Blake's eyes. He hesitated a moment and then rubbed his face wearily. He looked back at Blake,

his eyes watching him closely, as he begun to speak once again. "A Muggleborn's magic has great potential. They cannot be written off. Some wines are better than others right from the start. Though, they may not be as potent as an older wine, they have certain qualities that set them above other aged bottles.

"In some cases, the right mixture of old magic and new magic creates something even better, than if the old magic was mixed with another old magic. Blake, you are proof of that: your mother was a Muggleborn, your father a Pureblood. You are going to be a very powerful wizard. You still would have been a very powerful wizard without my added magic." Tomas stressed, trying to make sure Blake fully understood. "Though there is a detectable difference between a Pureblood's magic and a Muggleborn's magic, there is no real difference. A Muggleborn can be just as powerful and capable as a Pureblood. A Pureblood can be weaker and more incapable than a Muggleborn. The age of the magic doesn't necessarily matter. The magic can very possibly be powerful from the start. In some cases, the cross mixing of an old magic with another old magic, when they are too closely related to each other, has actually weakened the family magic as a result."

Tomas paused. He let what he had just said sink in to Blake's mind. He watched his son's face for any sign that he was getting the wrong idea. After a minute he spoke again.

"The Knights are of pureblood. We have always been of pureblood. The reason we have remain of pureblood, is because of our traditions. One of the things that truly separate Purebloods from Muggleborns is not our magic, but rather, our way of life." Tomas said honestly. He leaned into his desk, placing his weight on his elbows with his hands still folded in front of him. "Our traditions are sealed in magic and are rich in meaning. Muggleborns have no concept of this. They don't understand that a Lord is magically bonded to his charges. They don't understand the significance of that bond, nor do they understand what it means to go against it. They walk into our world free and completely unattached. They have no Lord to answer to, no bonds to influence them, and no family name to be judged by. It is rare to find a Muggleborn who is willing to fully accept the world they have fallen into. To be in the Knight family, they must accept our traditions absolutely. In all our history, never once has a Muggleborn witch been prepared to do that. Not even Nick and Carter fully accept the magical world and all its

traditions as their own. Though, they do accept that it is our way of life.

"The point of all this is, yes, there is a difference between Purebloods and Muggleborns. The difference is written into our very magic and our way of life. However, that doesn't make Muggleborns below us." Tomas said pointedly. "It just makes them different. They are different in the way that Irish culture is different than the Japanese culture, and the Japanese culture is different than the Hispanic culture. Do understand this, Blake?"

"Yes, I believe I understand what you are getting at." Blake affirmed. He could understand what his father was telling him. Though, a year ago might have been a different story. He could see why his father was hesitant in telling him, and why there were those who considered Purebloods better than Muggleborns. It would be very easy to misunderstand the principle behind Pureblood magic and Muggleborn magic. "Although we are different, we aren't different. The magic doesn't depend on how long it has been around. It depends on other factors, ones that seem rather complex and unpredictable. Put simply, I am no better than Carter or Nick, and they are no better than me. We just have a different way of life, one they find hard to accept and understand. It's just like how we have a hard time understanding how the muggle world works."

"Exactly." Tomas said with a warm smile, before turning serious once again. He reached across the desk and tapped the application form. It was one of the main reason that Blake was in his study, and the main reason that they were even discussing what they were. "None of the information filled out on this application is a detectable lie. They can't force me to fill it out with the complete truth. The information given just has to be truthful, which is why it has to be validated. The other children, who have their names magically placed in the Hogwarts Book upon their birth, can't lie about their information, as the magic of the book only ever tells the truth. It would be unfair, if applicants had the opportunity to give false information. Not to mention, the truth is what the school wants. I assure you that everything on here will be seen as the truth. So, will you please validate this now?"

Blake nodded. He picked up the small knife his father had set out for him to use earlier. He pricked his finger, and then let his blood fall on to the application. He pressed his thumb to his cut pointer finger to

stop the bleeding and watched the single drop of blood splashed against the parchment. The blood absorbed into it upon contact. The application glowed blue, while it validated the information as being the truth. It flashed white, and then returned to normal. His father held out his hand, palm up. Blake placed his injured hand in his father's, and the man healed the small cut quickly. He then took the application and brought it to sit in front of him. He signed it in the spot designate for parental consent. Blake watched, as his father cut his own finger and then let his blood fall onto the parchment. The application validated his signature and consent.

"Well, now it is up to Dumbledore." Tomas sighed. He rolled up the application and sealed it. "Vince."

"Master wishes something of Vince?" The house elf asked, when he popped into the room.

"Yes, please send this off with Elden." Tomas requested kindly, as he handed the application to the elf.

"Of course, Master Tomas." The elf said with a small bow and then popped away.

Tomas smiled at his son and then pushed his chair back. He got up and went over to one of the bookshelves. He glanced at Blake surreptitiously, before running his hand down one of the old tomes. Blake watched with surprise, as the bookshelf faded away to reveal an archway. Tomas turned to him and beckoned him over silently. Blake got up out of his chair slowly. Curiosity and a bit of uncertainty filled him, as he crossed over to his father. He knew this was another secret that his father had finally decided to let him in on.

When he looked through the archway and into the room on the other side, he saw that it was full of very old tomes and ancient looking artifacts. He saw the Knight Coat of Arms on many items. However, there were other items that had a different family's Coat of Arms on them. Everything was neatly organized on shelves that rested against the walls. The room itself was fairly narrow and was maybe 20 ft long.

"What is all this stuff?" Blake asked, looking at everything in the room with a keen eye. He was clearly very intrigued as to what the answer to his question might be. He fidgeted in the archway next to

his father with a small amount of impatience. Though he wanted nothing more than to explore what was present to him, he didn't dare move into the room without permission.

"This is our in-home vault. I am the only living soul who knows that it even exists. Well...that is, until now." Tomas said with a note of pride and looked down at Blake.

Blake stopped fidgeting at the tone of his father's voice. He looked away from the room and up at his father. He instantly understood that whatever this was about, it was very important. He could see that being allowed access and knowledge of this room was monumental in some way.

"You've earned the right to have access to the things in this room, but to one thing most specifically." Tomas said with intense emotion in his eyes. He then walked into the room. Blake hesitated in the archway, but followed when his father indicated for him to do so.

They walked to the very end of the room, where a single small table stood all on its own. Sitting on top of the table was what appeared to be a glass display case. Inside, there was an open rectangular box that was made of black metal. Engraved into the metal on the interior of the lid was the Knight Family Crest. There were two spots for two rings in the blood red, velvet cushion that rested perfectly inside the box. One of the spots was empty, and the other one was occupied.

Tomas smiled down at Blake with the same intense gaze as before. He then turned his attention to the box inside the display case. He slowly reached out with his right hand. It passed right through the glass with only the slightest show of disturbance. He took the ring from its spot and pulled his hand back out. Blake's heart quickened, as he looked closely at the ring his father had just removed from the case. The Knight Coat of Arms was embedded in the dark metal. It looked similar to the Lord's Ring his father constantly wore on his left middle-finger. Blake, just knew, that the ring his father was holding had to be the Knight Heir's Ring.

Blake looked up at his father with wide eyes, as he came to fully realize the situation. He knew that his father wouldn't have taken that ring out of safe keeping, not unless he had in mind an exact purpose for it. His father looked down at him with immense pride in

his eyes. He bent down in front of him, so he was at his level. He held the ring out in presentation.

"Son, I have wanted to place this ring on your finger for a few years now." Tomas started, his midnight blue eyes penetrating into Blake. "Over time, you have proven to me that you will be capable of bearing the responsibility of this ring. I can see that you will bring pride and honor to the Knight name. Blake, I want you to place this ring on your finger and wear it with nobility. The Knight Blood and Magic is within you. This ring is yours by every right. You are my chosen heir, and I would ask for no one else to be the one to continue the Knight name. I would ask for no one else to entrust the protection of what it means to be a Knight. You are a Knight in more than just name, and I am unbelievably proud of you."

Blake hesitantly reached out and took the ring in his right hand. He could feel the weight of it, as he held it in his palm. He knew from all that his father had taught him that putting on this ring was sealing his fate. This was more than just being named heir and becoming the one to inherit the Knight fortune, after his father passed on. Putting on the ring would mean that he would do everything in his power to protect the Knight name, the Knight fortune, and the Knight honor. That he would do whatever it took, even if that meant his death. It was a pledge similar to the one that weighed down the Lord's Ring.

By his father giving him this ring he was doing two things. First, he was devoting his very life to him in totality. The Lord would protect his chosen heir at all costs. Second, he was magically binding him as his heir, which was something that couldn't be taken back. Families rarely used their Heir's Rings anymore for reason that very reason. They liked having the room to change their heir, if they decided the one they originally had in mind was unsatisfactory. This ring would be unforgiving the second he slipped it on his finger.

"What if you get married and have a son someday?" Blake asked in a quiet whisper with his eyes trained on the ring in his hand. It felt heavier than before, as he ran through its significance in his mind.

"You are my son." Tomas said with sincerity. "You are mine, Blake. I want you as my heir. You are an incredible kid, no one could ask for a better heir." He paused and his voice changed to a soft whisper. "Blake, please, put that ring on your finger."

"You can't take this back." Blake stated seriously, and looked up to meet his father's eyes.

"I know." Tomas said simply, his eyes showed love, pride, and determination.

Without taking his eyes off his father, Blake slowly placed the ring onto his left middle-finger. The ring warmed, as it accepted him and resized to fit. Blake felt the binding magic of the ring sweep over him. He closed his eyes and shuddered at the feeling of the ring's magic dancing through his veins, reaching out to every inch of his body. When the magic settled and seal itself, he opened his eyes. His father was grinning at him widely. There was so much happiness in his father's face that Blake instantly smiled back without thought.

Tomas reached out and placed his hand against the skin of his son's neck. He sighed and shut his eyes in comfort, while Blake jumped. Instead of just feeling his father's hand, he could feel his father's magic and emotions as well. He could feel the deep connection to he had to his father through the simple touch. He could feel the love, the trust, and the happiness of his father. The feeling retreated, but his father's hand remained where it was. He looked to the man in front of him curiously.

"I have missed the connection ever since the day my father died." Tomas said quietly, and opened his eyes to look at Blake.

"Can...can I do that too?" Blake asked, still a bit shocked.

"You only have to will it, for the connection to open. If you're ever in danger, you only have to will for your ring to tell me, and I will know." Tomas said seriously with a fond smile. "I wanted you to have this, before the news broke that we aren't as dead as everyone thinks. Then today, you proved that you were ready for it on top of my desire for you to have it."

Blake reached up and put his hand on top of his father's, before willing the connection to open again. He could feel his father's love for him once more, and he grinned. He knew that his father would feel how much he loved him, and how grateful he was for all he had given him. His father stood up and wrapped him in a hug. After a second's pause, he kissed his hair and released him.

"Why don't you go have some fun? Take the rest of the day off." Tomas suggest warmly.

"Can I go fly?" Blake asked brightly.

"Sure, just stick close to the ground, okay?" Tomas asked pointedly.

"You aren't coming?" Blake asked surprised. His father had never let him fly alone.

"I have some business to take care of." Tomas told him with a reassuring smile. "I think you know better than to do something stupid that would cause you to fall and get hurt."

Blake nodded, and then walked with his father out of the room. When he they crossed back into the study, his father gave his shoulder a squeeze, before going to his desk and sitting down. He brought the stack of papers he had set aside earlier back to him. Blake walked across the room to the door. He paused there, as a thought occurred to him.

"You don't have to leave do you?" He asked wonderingly, and turned in the door frame to look at his father.

"Maybe. Nothing more than a few hours, though. I'll let you know if I do have to go." Tomas promised, when he looked up from his work.

Blake nodded in acceptance of the answer and slipped out of his father's study the rest of the way. He shut the door behind him and headed out to the Quidditch Pitch. As he walked through the house and then out onto grounds, he fingered the ring around his left middle-finger. He looked down at it, fully studying everything about it. He knew, from his father's Lord's Ring, that the thick metal band was made from black gold. Weaved into its surface were two intricate dragons. They danced along the band, until their heads came to rest beside several small, blood red, square cut rubies. The rubies formed a line along the center part of the ring, where the dark metal was raised to be flush with the stones. The Knight's Coat of Arms was engraved there, like a regal calling card for all to see.

He knew that old traditions were the Knight's way of life, but never did he imagine this ring on his finger. The significance of this ring he

knew. Tomas had made sure he knew. The ring he now wore told everyone who he was, and that he was to be untouched or the consequences would be dire. It gave him similar rights as a Lord. It provided protection, by fear of what Lord Knight would do in retaliation for actions taken against him. To attack a Lord was one thing, but to attack his heir was something completely different. In times of old, it was worthy of an instant death. It was seen as an attack in an attempt to end the family bloodline versus an attack against the family for their policies, which were two completely different things. Heirs were simply not to be harmed. Though, there was a difference between harming a named heir and harming an heir who was magically bound. To harm a named heir was asking for trouble. To harm an heir who wore their family's Heir's Ring was unforgivable.

As he came upon the broom shed, Blake pushed the weight of the ring he now wore to back of his mind. He removed his Nimbus 1090 from the shed and quickly took to the skies. Life was good, and it was even better in the air. He pushed the broom to top speed as he flew around the pitch. He couldn't imagine his life, if he hadn't missed the bus, thanks to Dudley pushing him to the ground, three years ago. In truth, he didn't even want to guess what three more years with the Dursleys would have done to him. His father had saved him. The last three years with his father had opened up his mind, his eyes, and his heart. The world he saw now was so different, and that wasn't even factoring in the magic he was surrounded by. He remembered being scared of everything and being hurt all the time by his cousin and Uncle. He most definitely wasn't scared anymore, and his father refused to let him be hurt. Where before, he saw a hopeless future, he now saw endless possibilities and adventures. The world would be his for the taking, it wouldn't take him.

Blake pushed the broom into a dive and whooped with glee, as the ground rushed up towards him. Life was most definitely good.

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The aged wizard stirred his morning tea and looked happily over the sea of students, who were enjoying breakfast before their classes started. He smiled fondly, as he watched them chatter on merrily. He watched, as the Weasley twins put something on one of their friend's plates without her notice. The girl shrieked seconds later, as whatever it was enlarged just before reaching her mouth. She glared

at the mirthful twins. He chuckled quietly to himself, as he watched them dash from the Great Hall in retreat of Miss Johnson's wrath. His eyes were drawn to the Hufflepuff table, where a young Mr. Diggory was animatedly retelling the story of catching the snitch in their last Quidditch match. He smiled fondly, as he remembered the spectacular catch himself. When his eyes drifted to the Ravenclaw table, his attention was immediately drawn to young Miss Clearwater. She was avidly studying a charms text that was a few years above her year level. He noted to himself that she would make a good Prefect. Finally, his attentions drifted to the Slytherin table, where Mr. Flint sat quietly and stared out blankly at his surroundings. The child was not the smartest with books. He feared the dimwitted boy wouldn't pass enough OWLs to continue on for his sixth year.

The old wizard was disturbed out of his musings, as a majestic looking spotted owl landed in front of him. He remembered this owl. The last time it came to him, it had brought a simple request for an application to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He removed the application from the owl's leg and fed it a small bit of bacon. The owl hooted happily, before it took flight once again. Now, normally he would wait to open such mail, but he was curious as to who the application was for. It was rare that someone, who was not recorded in the Hogwarts Book, applied to attend. He broke the seal and sipped at his tea, as he unrolled it. Tea spluttered from his mouth, as he gave the application one quick glance over.

He quickly dried it, before checking the validations. The application was completely truthful. This was...well, this could be a problem.

"Albus?" Minerva McGonagall asked concerned from beside him.

"Yes, my dear?" He asked her with a false smile.

"Is everything alright?" She inquired, and nodded to the parchment in his hand.


Albus Dumbledore looked around. He noted that most the staff and some of the student were staring at him in shock. It wasn't every day that the Headmaster sprayed his tea all over the mail he was reading.

"I need to go check a few things with the Ministry and compose a reply to this...uh...letter." Dumbledore said carefully, as he stood up

from his chair. He walked out of the hall with only one thing on his mind. The Knights were back.

You guys are all great, and I truly appreciate the support. So, thanks for the reviews, the story alerts, the story favorites, and the C2 adds. I love hearing your opinions, so remember to review. Also don't forget the new poll in choosing Blake's friends, this is your chance to influence the story and see something you want. So, please vote.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(6); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk; MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn(5); Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntlt; Arsao Tome; call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD(2); Kayls Cullen(5); KoniK47(2); SuperiorShortness(3);farwalker(4); Wondering Hail; Canuto-90; phantomerick(2); spacecatdet; verox29(4); twilightserious; Teufel1987(2); agouraki; Masterjedi1979; noodle-monster; fhippogriff; Mistress of Magic22; Lientjuhh; Popdude125; LanMandragoran; firelordeg;


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## THE BLADE OF KNIGHT

By

Dream of Many Dreams


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## PART TWO

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## THE SORCERER'S STONE

You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was. – Irish Proverb

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The Official Decision

He jumped back, narrowly avoiding the blade's edge. Only seconds after, he was forced to step away from another swipe. He watched his opponents intently, trying to read his next move. He had to dodge to his right to avoid a jab aimed at him. He parried the blow, and the sound of metal meeting metal echoed through the gym. He was about to spin in to deliver a hit, while he had his adversary's dagger locked with his own. At the last minute, he saw the move for what it was. He spun away from the trap, trying to avoid another attack. He felt the blade ghost across his back, barely slicing the skin. He turned to his assailant with determination and took to advancing forward. He took a swipe at him. His opponent calmly stepped back and allowed him to take the offensive in the fight. When he thought he had a clear shot, he made a jab. However, he was quickly countered. Metal connected with metal once again.

His adversary stepped into him and hooked his wrists, in an attempt to relieve him of his dagger. Using the distraction, he kicked out and caught the man's unguarded side. A slight hiss of pain left his challenger's lips, and his wrists were released. He sprang back quickly, as his opponent's dagger swung out at him. He was forced

to take the defensive. He did his best to dodge and counter the attacks sent his way. He watched intently for the perfect moment to turn the fight. After a few minutes, he saw an opening. He made to capitalize on it, but as he did, his wrist was caught in a strong grip. With a quick movement, the dagger was knocked out of his hand. Before he could even fully register it, he found himself flipped around and pinned with his back to his father's chest. The metal blade of his father's dagger was pressed to the skin of his neck.

With every breath he took, he could feel the cool metal threatening to open his flesh. He could feel tension in his father and knew he was not at all happy with their match. They stood like that for a few seconds with the threat looming over him. Though he knew his father would never actually kill him, the feeling of sharp metal on his skin unsettled him. He waited silently for the reminder of what would happen, if he allowed someone, who wasn't his father, to hold him in such a vulnerable position. Finally, he felt the blade press into him, only enough to nick him. He winced at the pain. It was the fifth nick he had received, since their training session began.

"You're distracted." Tomas Knight said with heavy disapproval, as he lowered his dagger. He ran his left thumb along the side of his son's neck, counting the nicks.

"Five." Blake said in a strong voice, answering the unspoken question held in his father's actions. He knew that hanging his head in shame or attempting to argue would get him nowhere. He had learned a long time ago to own up to his failures. He felt his father's hand move to his shoulder, and then he was turned to face the man. Midnight blue eyes connected with midnight blue, as his father kneel down in front of him.

"What is on your mind?" Tomas asked seriously, as he began to heal the wounds Blake received during their fight. "You usually don't let me get metal to your throat five times in a row."

"It's the 24th." Blake answered quietly. He sucked in a sharp breath, when his father's hands brush over a gash on his left side.

"Ah...I see." Tomas said with understanding, before he examined and then healed the wound. His previously stern eyes softened, when he gazed back at his son's impassive face. He gave a

comforting smile. "As I have said before, I'm sure you have nothing to worry about."

"He doesn't have to let me attend." Blake replied despondently.

Tomas reached out and took Blake's hands in his own. He gave him a reassuring look. "Albus Dumbledore would never deny a child their education. He has yet to expel a single pupil. He may not like the idea of a Knight walking his halls, but he won't deny you the same chance he gives every other child."

Blake nodded in acceptance of his father's words.

Tomas squeezed his son's hands lightly, before he released them. He set back to work on healing the minor wounds that Blake had received during their training session.

Blake knew his father was most likely right. Dumbledore wasn't an unfair man. He was known for giving everyone an equal chance, and more often than not, he would give someone a second chance. However, he was still nervous about it, as there was still a slight possibility that Dumbledore wouldn't want to risk allowing a Knight free reign of Hogwarts. Ever since the Daily Prophet announced that the Noble and Most Ancient House of Knight had resurfaced, a lot of speculation had spread throughout Britain about their true motives for returning.

Most of the magical community was weary of them. The last that society knew of the Knight family, they had attempted to end the Ministry of Magic before it had even really got started. With the amount of power they held at the time, they had nearly succeeded in doing so. The fact that they managed to remain hidden for over three centuries, didn't help convince anyone that they weren't just as much of a threat as they were all those years ago. It took serious magic to hide from the Hogwarts Book. To be able to portkey and apparate around unnoticed was another matter. That took having loyal people placed in the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and the Department of Magical Transportation. Needless to say, no one was about to underestimate them.

Though Blake had not been out in public yet, his father had. He was called before the Wizengamot, as soon as their presence was known to the Ministry. It had been a whirl wind of meetings and

threats ever since. Of course, the very clever ruse that they had resurfaced for his desire to attend Hogwarts, added to the way they announced that they were back, had diverted some of the suspicion from the general public. However, the Minister, Dumbledore, and several other people in high places, had made it clear that they weren't taking anything at face value. It went without saying, that they would be watched closely.

"Alright, you're good." Tomas proclaimed, once he couldn't find even one blemish left on Blake's skin.

"Can we go eat lunch now?" Blake asked eagerly with a bit of nervousness.

"I suppose." Tomas agreed and stood up.

Blake grabbed his t-shirt that he had discarded earlier up off the floor. He put it on quickly, before following his father out of the gym. When they got to the entrance hall, his father headed up to the second floor. Blake kept walking on his intended path, as he knew his father was going to check his study for the mail.

Upon entering the dining room, he sat down in his usual spot at the long alabaster table. He was presented with a turkey sandwich and a bowl of fruit salad. He also had a glass of milk and a glass of water to drink. He gulped down a good portion of his water, while he waited for his father. His wait wasn't long. His father arrived only a few minutes later. After sitting down, the man placed an envelope with emerald green writing on it in front of him. He tentatively reached out and picked it up. He looked to his father, silently asking for permission to open it.

"I want you to eat first." Tomas said pointedly. He knew that Blake would be too excited to even think about food, after he opened the letter.

"Fine." Blake agreed begrudgingly and set down the letter. He hurriedly dug into his lunch.

"Are you a starved hippogriff or a ten year old boy?" Tomas asked with a raise eyebrow, as he watched Blake shovel down his food.

Blake gave him an apologetic look and slowed his pace, knowing that was his warning. He sat back in a respectable manner and conducted the rest of his meal, as he had been taught. He received a nod of approval from his father.

"Have you decided on what you want for your birthday, or are you still thinking about it?" Tomas asked curiously, when he finished chewing a bite of his sandwich.

"Well...I was thinking maybe we could go somewhere." Blake said brightly.

"Oh, really, where do you have in mind?" Tomas asked inquisitively.

"I was thinking some place warm, so we can get away from this dreary weather." Blake said with a shrug. He then forked up a piece of honeydew and popped it into his mouth.

"Is there any where specific that has captured your interests?" Tomas inquired.

"I wouldn't mind learning a bit of Swahili." Blake said with a huge grin, before continuing on excitedly. "If we go to Kenya, we would get the safari and the beach."

"I could take you to the zoo, and we have beaches here." Tomas suggested teasingly.

Blake gave him an appalled look. "I don't want to see caged in animals, and our beaches are cold. Also, we only have deep water coral."

"So, you want to go scuba diving, while in Kenya?" Tomas asked with interest.

Blake nodded vigorously, and launched into a long winded explanation of what they could do on vacation there. He wanted to go on Safari, so he could see the wildlife of Africa in their natural environment. He was particularly interest in seeing the lions and the elephants. He wanted to go scuba diving, so he could see the tropical reefs and fish up close. He wanted to spend time with a few of the tribes. He had found their culture interesting, when he had

studied Africa last spring. Though, what he was really excited about was the prospect of climbing Mt. Kenya.

Tomas just listened, knowing that this was going to make for a long trip. He could see that Blake was truly interested in going, and would most likely enjoy every minute of it. With Blake heading to Hogwarts in the fall, he wanted to spend all the time he could with him. Going on vacation would be a perfect way to spend time with his son. It would give him an excuse for not being able to answer to the Minister's, the Wizengamot's, and Dumbledore's every beck and call.

Blake chattered on about Kenya for the remainder of lunch. However, he was not so distracted in his excitement about going to Kenya that he forgot about the letter sitting on the table in front of him. When he took the last bite of his fruit salad, he quieted. He looked to the envelope with trepidation.

"Are you going to open it or stare at it?" Tomas questioned in a light tone, as he watched Blake hesitate in picking it up. Blake looked to him unsurely. His father gave him an encouraging smile and nodded to the envelope on the table.

Blake took a deep breath, before he reached out to the envelope. He read the address, written in emerald green ink, on the front of it, as he picked it up.

Mr. B. Knight
East Wales

With nervousness and excitement, Blake flipped the envelope over and broke the wax seal. His heart pounded in his chest, as he pulled out two slips of parchment and a train ticket. He unfolded the parchment and read the top piece. A smile spread over his face, after he read the first line of the letter.

HOGWARTS SCHOOL
of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore
(Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock,
Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)

Dear Mr. Knight,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins September 1st. We await your owl by no later than July 31st.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall
Deputy Headmistress

Blake looked up from the letter, and grinned victoriously at his father. "I'm officially going to Hogwarts!"

"Congratulations." Tomas said happily and smiled widely at his ecstatic son. He held his hand out for the letter. Blake willingly gave him the acceptance letter, before picking up the second piece of parchment and reading over it.

HOGWARTS SCHOOL of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

UNIFORM

First-year students will require:

1. Three sets of plain work robes (black)
2. One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear
3. One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)
4. One winter cloak (black, silver fastenings)

Please note that all pupil's clothes should carry name tags

COURSE BOOKS

All students should have a copy of each of the following:

The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk

A History of Magic by Bathilda Bangshot

Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling

A Beginners' Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch

One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore

Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander

The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

OTHER EQUIPMENT

1 wand

1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)

1 set glass or crystal vials

1 telescope

1 set brass scales

Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad

PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS

Blake groaned in protest, when he read the last line on the list. He couldn't believe he wasn't going to be allowed to take his broom.

"What?" Tomas asked concerned and took the list from him. He gave a light laugh, after quickly skimming over it. He knew instantly what Blake's groan was for. "Looks like you're grounded for the year, son."

"Why?" Blake asked dramatically.

"I believe it is for safety reasons." Tomas said amusedly and actually read over the list. "Normally, eleven year olds don't have much experience with flying on brooms. It would just be unwise to let them bring their own broom and fly unsupervised."

"What am I supposed to do without my Nimbus?" Blake asked in the same dramatic tone.

"It is not the end of the world, Blake." Tomas said with a chuckle. "You'll still have flying lessons. You'll be able to use the school's brooms then."

Blake sighed heavily and sat back in his chair. A scowl marred his face. "Ridiculous."

Tomas full on laughed at the utterly disgruntled look on Blake's face. "You'll live. Now, stop acting like a two year old and go send a reply to this. When you're done, get dress in proper clothes and meet me in the entrance hall."

"I thought you wanted me to finish my report about the influence magicals had on the Constitution of Clarendon." Blake said with a bit of confusion.

Tomas held up the Hogwarts supplies list. "We'll be spending the entire month of August in Kenya. We need to get your supplies now. That way, you will have time to look over your books before we leave."

Blake's eyes went wide with surprise and excitement. "Really? We're going for the whole month?"

"As you pointed out, there is a lot to do there. Plus, you're leaving for Hogwarts in September." Tomas explained with a shrug.

"Can you really be gone that long?" Blake asked with a small amount of doubt.

"My business can wait." Tomas told him positively. "Now, go get ready."

Blake grinned, as he got up and left the dining room. He hurriedly went up to his bedroom and got some parchment out of his writing desk. He composed a polite note that acknowledged his acceptance to Hogwarts and informed Professor McGonagall that he would be attending. He called Raphael and had the elf send his letter off with Elden. He decided to take a quick shower, before getting dressed. Once dried off, he put on a black t-shirt and a pair of black trousers. He wore a set of expensive black, button up robes that were lined with blood red red silk, over top. He folded down the high collar, and fastened the material with two black gold dragon head clips. He did the same with the sleeves. He put on his shoes, and looked in the mirror one last time. Satisfied that he was ready, he left his room and made his way to the entrance hall. His father was already there waiting for him, dressed in his own set of expensive robes.

"Well, don't you look like the true heir of the Knight Family?" Tomas said with a grin, as he watched him descend the stairs.

"Do you have my list?" Blake asked expectantly, as he crossed the entrance hall over to him.

"What do you take me for?" Tomas asked in mock offense, before turning a bit more serious. "Carter is working right now, but he said he would come over this evening to celebrate. Nick is still on the job in Sussex, so he won't be able to be here tonight. I sent him an owl about your letter and us going to Kenya. He should be back by Friday."

Blake nodded his understanding, and then grabbed onto his father's offered arm. A second later he felt the familiar sensation of apparating. Noise assaulted his ears as soon as he felt ground beneath his feet once again. The sounds of music and many people talking at once filled the lane in front of him. He looked around and smiled, as he took in his first sight of Diagon Alley. There were witches and wizards everywhere. There were some who were dressed in flamboyant colors, while others were dressed in dull browns and greys. Children ran through the crowds laughing happily, as their parent chased after them. Many different shops lined both sides of the walk. Almost all of them had flashy advertisements or extravagant displays of various products in their windows.

"Come on, we need to go to Gringotts first." Tomas told him, and nodded to the large white building that was a ways up the Alley.

Blake followed beside his father, as they began to make their way to the stone building. His excitement decreased a bit, as he noticed that people tended to move out of their way, only to glance back at them surreptitiously. He looked up at his father and saw that he seem completely unperturbed by it. He decided to follow his father's example. He turned his attention back to their destination and straightened his back. While he still noticed the looks, he paid them very little mind.

When they passed through the outer bronze doors of Gringotts, one of the goblins guarding them bowed in welcome. Both, Tomas and Blake, tilted their heads to the goblin politely. The goblin raised a questioning eyebrow at them, before focusing his attention on the next customer entering the bank. Upon walking further inside the massive building, they reaching the inner set of doors, which were made of silver. Blake quickly read the inscription that was engraved into them.

Enter, stranger, but take heed
Of what awaits the sin of greed,

For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn,
So if you seek beneath out floors,
A treasure that was never yours
Thief, you have been warned, beware,
Of finding more than treasure there.

"Doesn't make them sound too friendly, does it?" Blake commented, as Tomas ushered him over to the queue of people waiting to speak with a teller goblin.

"In reality, they're not." Tomas said seriously, in a quiet tone. "Goblin-wizard relations are delicate at best. You'll learn your fair share about our history with them, when you get to Hogwarts. They have good reason to be weary of us, and we have good reason to be weary of them. If anyone were to try and steal from them, they would pay the very high price of their life. No Ministry law could step in to prevent it, as Gringotts is sovereign territory. The thief would never be allowed the chance to exit their doors with their heart still beating."

"It would be a suicide mission, at any rate." A deep male voice said from behind them.

Tomas stiffened and turned around. Blake turned as well. He looked up to his father and noted the false smile on his face. He understood why, when he looked to the person who had spoken. The man was dark skinned, tall, and well built. However, it was the man's Auror robes that told Blake the reason for his father's displeasure.

"The bank vaults are hundreds of miles underground. There are several different tracks going to the various vaults, creating quite the maze. Furthermore, there are dragons guarding the high security vaults." The man said, while looking at Blake. Blake met the man's brown eyes unwaveringly. The man shifted his attention away from Blake's face, and he seemed to assess everything else about him. His eyes then flicked to Tomas, and his voice took on a severe quality. "A thief would be lucky to make it out alive, even if the goblins didn't catch up to them."

Tomas held the man's intense gaze, as he spoke in a cordial tone. "No sane wizard would ever entertain the idea."

"Lord Knight, on behalf of the Ministry of Magic, I am here to escort you and your son during your time spent in the Alley today." The Auror informed in a professional manner.

"It's a pleasure to see you again, Auror Shacklebolt. I suppose, if the Ministry feels that it is necessary." Tomas agreed politely, and then glanced down at Blake with an unreadable expression. Blake gave him a questioning look, but Tomas discretely shook his head.

"Minister Fudge thinks it very necessary." The Auror assured.

Tomas put a fake smile on his face, as he turned his attention back to the imposing man. "Well then, Auror Shacklebolt, I would like to introduce you to my son, Blake."

Blake stepped forward with a polite grin and extended his right hand to the man. "It's nice to make your acquaintance, Auror Shacklebolt. I am Blake Alexander Knight."

"As charming as your father, aren't you?" Auror Shacklebolt said bemused, as he shook Blake's hand.

"If you'll excuse us..." Tomas said and nodded to the open teller that was waiting for them. Auror Shacklebolt nodded and turned away from them.

Blake followed his father over to the teller. He looked back to see the Auror walking towards the doors.

"He's smart." Tomas commented from beside him. His attention was fixed on the man as well.

"Why do you say that?" Blake asked curiously.

"Not only is Gringotts sovereign from the Ministry, it is declared as non-hostile territory for wizards. A mass murderer could walk in and get their gold, even with the enter Auror forces waiting in the lobby. No action could be taken against him or her, as long as they stayed within the walls of Gringotts." Tomas explained factually.

"So, if you wanted to contest him or cause problems, you wouldn't have been able to." Blake said in understanding.

"Exactly." Tomas agreed. He then turned to the teller, who had begun to drum his nails on the counter in impatience.

Blake watched the Auror stop just inside the inner doors. The man turned and leaned against the snow white wall. Auror Shacklebolt's brown eyes connected with his. He held the Auror's intense gaze, until his father gave him a light nudge.

"Good afternoon, we're here to make a withdrawal from the Knight vault." Tomas said pleasantly to the teller goblin.

"Wand?" The goblin asked, as held out his long fingered hand.

Blake watched, as his father rather reluctantly handed over his wand. The goblin examined it closely, before handing it back.

"Everything seems in order." The goblin declared, before calling out behind him. "Rumskul!"

A second goblin came over to the first, and the two began to speak in Goobledegook. Blake listened to the rapid language intently. By context of body language and accounting for the present situation, Blake got the impression that the teller goblin was warning the other one about something. Blake looked to Tomas questioningly, but received a head shake in response. Finally, the two goblins quieted, and return their attention to them.

"Follow me." Rumskul beckoned. "I will take you to your vault."

The two Knights stepped around the counter and followed Rumskul over to one of the many doors leading off of the lobby. Rumskul directed for them to pass through, as he held the door open for them. Blake was surprised to find himself standing in a narrow stone passageway. The torches along the walls were the only source of light, and there were rail tracks attached to the floor. The path sloped downward, and it seemed to go on forever.

Rumskul whistled. Only seconds later, a small cart came hurtling towards them. It stopped a short distance off, and all three of them climbed into it. The cart took off at high speeds as soon as Rumskul pulled the lever. Blake immensely enjoyed the zooming ride down into the caverns of Gringotts. They passed two different Dragons and several protective enchantments. Blake couldn't really get a

good look at the dragons, as it was fairly dark and the cart flew past quickly. However, he did feel bad for them. Being trapped miles underground didn't sound like much of a life for a dragon. Finally, the cart stopped, and the goblin climbed out onto a platform.

"Vault 23." The goblin proclaimed, before he stepped up to the large metal door that guarded their vault.

Tomas climbed out of the cart, and he indicated for Blake to get out as well. Blake waited with anticipation, as he watched the goblin pressed his palm to the door. The second the goblin's hand made contact, Blake could here several locks clicking into place. The goblin stepped back, and his father stepped up to the vault. He placed his left hand on the cool metal surface. Once again, the sound of locks clicking into place met Blake's ears.

"Come." Tomas said and wave Blake to his side. Blake did as asked, and then looked to his father for further instructions. Tomas nodded to the vault door in front of them. "The vault's security reads the auras of the beings on the platform. It has to register that each being is allowed access, before it will allow the vault to be opened."

Blake nodded his understanding. He would have to place one of his hands to the door, just as his father and Rumskul did.

"Use your left hand and be sure your heir ring makes contact." Tomas instructed calmly and gave his son an encouraging smile.

Blake did as he was told. He felt the ring warm and its magic zinged through him. Several more locks clicked into place, and then the door disappeared altogether. Blake's eyes widened at seeing what was behind it. The vault was huge. Mounds of gold, silver, and bronze were stacked up everywhere, leaving only narrow pathways through it. Along the walls there were several old trunks that contained family heir looms. Blake saw that, like with their in home vault, some of the heir looms were engraved with a different family's crest. He only hesitated a moment, before following his father into the vault completely.

"Have a look around." Tomas suggested, as he stepped over to one of the mound of gold.

Blake scanned over the various items and ultimately decided upon investigating a set of silver goblets that were piled in one of the open chests. His interest in them was solely for the fact that they had a different family's coat of arms on them. The design was very simple. It was made up of a triangle that encompassed a circle and had a straight line running through it, which cut the design into two halves that mirrored each other. He didn't recognize it at all. From how basic it was, Blake guessed that it belonged to a very old family. He glanced back over his shoulder to see his father counting gold into a money pouch.

"Dad?" He called over to his father.

"Yeah?" Tomas asked and looked up from what he was doing. He sighed at see what had taken Blake's interest. "It's the Peverell Coat of Arms."

Blake thought hard, trying to remember hearing the name before. He kept drawing blanks. He couldn't remember one instance where the name was mentioned. He looked back at the goblets, before returning his focus to Tomas. "Who were they?"

"They are a family name that has long passed." Tomas informed impassively and continued to count the different coins into his money pouch.

"You don't want to tell me." Blake pointed out.

"No, I do not." Tomas agreed.

Blake could see he wasn't going to get answers, so he dropped the subject. He cast one last glance at the goblets, before he crossed the vault over to his father. He watched, as his father finished putting galleons into his money pouch.

"Through the Potter bloodline, you are related to them." Tomas said, after a minute of silence.

"Why does the Knight family have a bunch of their stuff then?" Blake asked curiously.

"That's not an answer you need to have yet. Don't worry your mind over this, Blake." Tomas said seriously. "I only told you what I did, because it is your right to know. Just –"

"Be a kid, while I still can. I know." Blake interrupted with a slightly annoyed tone.

"When the time comes, you'll know everything." Tomas promised and pocketed the money pouch. He picked up five galleons from the stack and held them out to Blake, which caused his son to instantly brighten.

"Generous." Blake commented, before pocketing the money.

"Yeah, well don't spend it all in one spot. That's your spending money, until we get back from Kenya." Tomas said sternly, but the effect was canceled out by him ruffling Blake's hair.

"Daaaad." Blake whined, and batted his father's hand away.

"Let's go, we got places to be and things to buy." Tomas said happily. He threw an arm over Blake's shoulder and directed him out of the vault.

As soon as they passed through the entrance, the door sealed itself. They climbed back into the cart, where Rumskul was waiting for them. It was only minutes later that they were back in the lobby of Gringotts. Blake walked alongside his father towards the exit. Tomas nodded to Auror Shacklebolt, as they passed by him, and the Auror hesitantly fell into step beside them.

"We don't bite, you know?" Blake asked seriously, as he watched the man repeatedly glance at them cautiously.

"I assure you, Auror Shacklebolt, that causing trouble is not on our agenda." Tomas said honestly. "I recognize the Ministry of Magic as the governing body of these lands. If it is by order of the Minister that you escort us today, then I will not be contesting it."

"The Ministry of Magic is the governing body of all those who reside within Britain." Auror Shacklebolt said pointedly, as he caught on to the fact that Tomas had not acknowledged the Ministry as his governing body.

"So it would seem." Tomas said dispassionately. He then turned his focus to Blake. "How about we get your uniform first?"

"I guess." Blake agreed with a small amount of reluctance. He hated getting his measurements taken.

Blake followed his father up the Alley to Twilfit and Tatting's. When they entered the shop, he instantly knew that the place was not one the average wizard or witch could afford to shop at. There were no premade robes or clothing. The main area of the shop consisted of a variety of different types of materials with different patterns. He recognized most of the materials as being ones he would find in his closet, which indicated they were very expensive. It was clear that everything would be tailor made to fit perfectly. He wondered briefly where the average family shopped for their robes.

"Good afternoon. I am Naomi. How may I help you?" A mid-age witch, who was dressed in light blue robes, asked politely. Her brown hair was in a fancy up do. Her curls bounced lightly, as she surveyed them with her brown eyes. She gave Tomas and Blake looks of approval, but she frowned when her attention went to Shacklebolt.

Tomas stepped up to the counter she was standing behind and gave her a gracious smile. "My son is heading off to Hogwarts this year. He is in need of his uniform."

The woman's face lit up at the prospect of such a large sale. "What materials would you like for them?"

"Well, that is up to Blake." Tomas told her politely. He looked back to Blake. He raised an eyebrow at him inquiringly

"I would like black silk for the robes, genuine organic cotton for the shirts and trousers, and black cashmere for the cloak." Blake said simply. His father gave him a smile and a nod of approval.

"Such good taste." Naomi said happily, as she wrote down what he wanted. "And who exactly am I tailoring for?"

"Tomas Knight." Tomas informed her.

Her quill stilled, and she looked up with surprise. After studying Tomas' face closely, recognition lit in her eyes. She quickly shook it off the last of her shock and a smile crossed her face once again. "An honor, I do believe, Lord Knight. Anything particular for the robes, do you have a preferred cut or a preferred style of fastenings?"

"As I said, it is all up to Blake. He's the one who has to wear them." Tomas said kindly.

"I have a catalog of acceptable uniform designs and the extras aloud to go on them. That is if you wished to look at it, Young Knight." She said respectfully, while looking at Blake. It was clear that she now understood that Blake would be the one controlling the sale.

"Sounds interesting." Blake said with a shrug. He didn't really want to spend time going over robe designs, but he knew that what he wore represented the Knight name. Status was visual. He couldn't run around dressed as a rag-muffin, nor could he run around dress as a commoner. Knight blood ran in his veins, and there were certain standards to uphold. He would uphold them, as it was his duty to do so.

Blake walked up to stand next to his father, as Naomi retrieved the catalog from under the counter. She opened it and flipped to the right page, before set it down to face them. The Hogwarts standard uniform actually made him grimace slightly. It was a very basic and simple design. The cut was square, and it only came with a single fastening over the chest. The style was fairly out dated, when compared to the robes of modern day. He decided that maybe it wasn't such a bad idea to spend a bit of time looking over robe designs.

"That is a no." Blake declared and pointed to the picture of the standard cut.

"It is the traditional though." Naomi defended, but her voice held understanding as well. Her eyes roamed over the two Knights appraisingly. "However, I see that you two like the traditional with a modern spice."

"There are traditions to a point. However, remaining completely stuck in the past, even if it is just robes, only holds up progress for

our future." Tomas commented languidly, as he looked over the designs.

"What about these? They aren't so box cut, like the rest. Plus, they have the double fastening over the chest. " Blake suggested to his father, and tapped his finger to one of the designs in the catalog.

"I was thinking about these ones, as they have the wider sleeve that folds back. They'll be less restrictive, and you can adjust their length to suit your needs." Tomas said, pointing at a different design.

"I like that, but they are so square." Blake said with a slight shake of his head.

"I don't see a difference." Auror Shacklebolt commented off to the side. He was leaning against the end of the counter and looking terribly board. He got identical sidelong glances from the two Knights and a disapproving scowl from Naomi. He looked away from them.

"I could cross the two." Naomi suggested, as she peered down at the two designs that they had indicated.

"They wouldn't be Hogwarts approved then." Tomas denied, and shook his head slightly. "I have enough problems. We don't need to upset Albus Dumbledore over robes."

Naomi giggled and gave Tomas a knowing smile. "Yes, I've read all about those problems in the Prophet, and I would say that you do indeed have enough. However, I'm sure I could get the design approved. It isn't so far reaching. We could even add in a high collar to be folded down, like these ones." She indicated to a third design. "For all of them, the inner lining is charmed to change for the student's house colors, and the Hogwarts crest is charmed to change to their house crest. I do say, with so much color clashing against the monotony of the black, these will look quite stunning. Here, let me sketch something up, and you can tell me what you think. Which house are you going for, Young Knight?"

"I've been told I am a tossup, but I think Ravenclaw would be nice." Blake said with an impassive shrug.

Both Knights watched, as she sketched a quick design that combined the three original ones. She filled in the pencil sketch to Ravenclaw colors once she was finished. Blake instantly liked it way more than all the others. It was still simple like the traditional design, only it had a bit more color to it. In Blake's mind that added color made all the difference. The designs of near solid black were not appealing to him.

"So, what do you think?" Naomi asked and turned the design so they could see it.

"They look great." Tomas said approvingly, and Blake nodded his agreement. "Are you sure that you can get these approved?"

"They still hold the conservative standard, and they aren't too flashy." She said, as she looked over the design with a critical eye and a contemplative look. "How about I take your son's measurements today, and I'll make his robes pending the design's approval. You can choose a back up design, just in case. Once they are ready, you can come back in to pick them up and make payment."

"Sounds agreeable, but you'll have to keep contact with an associate of mine." Tomas told her pleasantly. She raised an eyebrow at this. Tomas gave her a cordial smile. "We're going out of country for the entire month of August."

"Where to?" Auror Shacklebolt asked instantly.

"Kenya." Tomas said with a forced polite tone. He turned to the Auror and gave the man a pointed look. "Before you start running through a list of all the possible nefarious activities that I might get up to there, we are going for Blake's birthday. It is strictly a vacation."

"Who will I need to contact then?" Naomi asked inquiringly, effectively breaking the tension between Tomas and the Auror.

"Carter Mason. He will be informed of the situation, and he will know exactly what we desire." Tomas assured her. "However, while we are at it, we should look at the cloak designs."

Another half hour later, Blake led his father and Auror Shackbolt out of the shop. He really hoped that the designs they came up with would be approved, because the other ones were painfully dull. How anyone could stand to be dressed like that, he couldn't fathom.

"Where do we need to go now?" Blake asked, flicking his eyes up and down the Alley.

"We'll go to Ollivander's and then work our way back for the rest of what you need." Tomas told him and indicated further up the Alley.

Blake was disappointed and unimpressed, when he saw the outside of the wand shop. For being considered the best wand maker around, he thought that the Ollivander's shop wouldn't look so shabby. The outside paint was fairly dirty, and there were peeling gold letters on the overhead sign that read 'Ollivanders: Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B. C.' Blake looked doubtfully at the single dusty wand that was displayed on a purple cushion in the window.

"Not everything can be judge by its cover." Tomas said sternly, as he looked into Blake's eyes piercingly. "I expect you to always remember that, son."

"Yes sir." Blake responded instantly to the reprimand.

"Go on in." Tomas said, while nodding to the door.

"You aren't coming?" Blake asked concerned. He thought that getting his wand would be something his father would want to be present for.

"Nope, Auror Shackbolt and I are going to stay out here." Tomas said with a pointed glance at the Auror in question.

Understanding washed through Blake. He gave an indifferent shrug, while looking at the Auror. He walked up to the door of the shop. When he brushed past his father, the man pulled him into a firm hug. Blake returned it immediately.

"(Trust Ollivander, he knows what he is supposed to do. Also, don't forget that the wand cores won't be able to draw from you, since you have so much control over your magic in raw form. You need to give your magic to the core, when you test the wands.)" Tomas whisper

into his son's ear in rapid Bulgarian. He then kissed Blake's hair, before he released him. He then took out seven galleons from his money pouch, and handed them to Blake. "Good luck."

Blake nodded and accepted the money, before he turned to enter the shop. The inside didn't look any more promising than the outside. The old shelves were dusty and had many narrow boxes stacked on them awkwardly. He only got a few steps into the shop, when Mr. Ollivander came out of the back.

"Ah, Young Master Knight." Ollivander greeted, upon taking notice of him. His silvery eyes scanned the shop. "Where is your father?"

"Entertain bureaucracy." Blake said dryly, and nodded back to the door. He knew instantly that Ollivander was a member of the Knight's Blade. The fact he called him Young Master Knight, added to the fact that his father said to trust him, told him as much.

Ollivander moved slightly to glance out the window. "I see. Well, I suppose you are here for a wand, yes?"

"Yes, I'm going to Hogwarts in September." Blake said happily and walked further into the shop. He stopped a few feet away from Ollivander.

"Well, congratulations on that." Ollivander told him, before he stepped forward and closed the distance between them. "May I see your hands, Young Master Knight?"

Blake lifted his hands up and then let Ollivander take them in his own. He watched, as Ollivander shut his eyes and seemed to focus intently on something. After a few minutes, Ollivander opened his eyes and released his hands.

"You will be difficult." Ollivander said mysteriously, as he walked off to one of the shelves lining the left wall. "Hmm...perhaps...or maybe..."

Blake watched amusedly, as Ollivander crisscrossed through the shop. When he came back over to the counter, he set down at least ten different boxes. The old man organized the boxes into a row. He had an intense look on his face, as he continuously swap one boxes position for another. It was ten minutes later that he finally snapped

out of it. He picked up the box on the far left and removed the lid. He offered the wand to Blake.

"9 inches, maple, phoenix feather." Ollivander said encouragingly.

Blake picked up the wand, but the second he tried to connect to it, he knew it wasn't his wand. He dropped it back into the box and shook his head.

"I suppose not." Ollivander said, as he picked up the box on the far right. He removed the lid and offered the wand to Blake. "10 inches, willow, unicorn hair."

Blake picked up the wand, only to put it back a second later. "That one is more unfriendly than the first."

Ollivander hummed and picked up one of the boxes in the middle. He opened it and offered the wand to Blake. "11 ½ inches, birch, dragon heartstring."

Blake only got as far as ghosting his hand over the wand. He shook his head. "No."

Ollivander had him try the other seven wands. Each one had a different combination of core and wood. None of them felt compatible. Ollivander looked at Blake curiously and drummed the fingers of his right hand on the counter. "You are a tricky customer, as you have very good control over you magic. We are going to have to find the perfect core that will submit to you completely. Furthermore, your magical signature is very unique."

Blake remained silent. He wasn't sure how to respond to that. Though, it seemed that Ollivander didn't require a response. The old man turned away from him and went to the back store room. He came back out caring two flat trays that were stacked together. He set the trays on the counter. One held a bunch of different woods, and the other held a bunch of different wand cores.

"Find which ones feel the most compatible." Ollivander instructed. "That way I know the right combination we are looking for."

Blake stepped up and pushed his magic out to touch the woods. Most of them he had very little compatibility with. There were a few

that seemed friendlier than the others. "You do realize you could sell me almost any wand, and I would be able to wield it."

"Indeed you could." Ollivander agreed distractedly. He seemed to get more excited, as Blake's hand drifted to the far left corn of the tray.

Blake gave him a questioning look, but continued on with what he was doing. He stopped suddenly, as one of the woods gave off a serene calm, when his magic brushed over it. He picked up the light wood. It felt at home resting in his palm.

"Excellent, Young Master Knight, truly excellent." Ollivander said happily. "That would be hornbeam. It makes for a very powerful wand. Few can harness it, for there are few powerful enough that it will respect. Now, for the tricky part: finding your core type."

Blake put the wood back and then set about running his hand over the various cores. There were the traditional cores to a few exotic ones. However, most didn't even feel remotely compatible. He shook his head after running his hand over all of them.

"I have placed five wands in the Knight Family. All were just as difficult." Ollivander commented, as he walked out from behind the counter and began collecting boxes once again. He came back over a few minutes later, with his arms laden with several boxes. He opened one and held it out to Blake. "9 inches, hornbeam, phoenix feather."

Blake picked up the wand and pushed his magic into it. It was workable, but not a match. He told Ollivander as much.

"13 inches, hornbeam, unicorn hair." Ollivander said, as he offered another wand.

Blake picked it up and shook his head. He set it back in its box.

"Alright, how about this one." Ollivander said, before opening another box. "11 inches, hornbeam, dragon heartstring."

Blake picked it up, and he instantly knew that it wasn't the right wand. He was once again offered wand after wand. All were of the

hornbeam wood. He could easily over power the cores and use the wands, which he proved to Ollivander by doing a few simple spells. However, his magic refused to bond to any of the cores, as none of them were willing to submit to him. Every wand he picked up would try to draw on his magic. His magic and the core would clash together, as they fought for control. It was after at least twenty more wands, that he finally found the one. When he first picked it up, he felt it try to draw from him, like all of the ones he had previously tried. However, instead of continuing to do so, it stopped. The second he pushed his magic into it, the core accepted it eagerly. The wand warmed in his hand and gave off a soothing calm feeling. His magic zinged through him, and he felt it connect to the wand.

"This is the one." Blake declared with a grin on his face.

Ollivander hummed in acknowledgement, before he took back the wand and studied it closely. "11 inches, hornbeam, with a phoenix feather core. I'm afraid I cannot tell you much about it, as I did not make this wand. My grandfather was its crafter. However, I can tell you that it is a very powerful wand."

"Do you know what he used to on the wood?" Blake asked curiously. Most of the hornbeam wands that he had tried were very light in color, almost white in some cases. This one, however, was a dark grey that was nearly black.

Ollivander ran his fingers over the wand's surface. "I believe he sealed the wand with the ash from the phoenix, who gave him the feather. It is rare, but sometimes a phoenix will give one of its feathers on a burning day. They will allow the wand-maker to take a bit of their ash along with the feather. I have yet to be given such an opportunity." He paused looking over the crafting of the wand once more, before looking at Blake. "With the ash sealed into the wood, the phoenix feather's magic is able to seep into the wood's every pore, creating a very sentient object. A wand, such as this one, will wait centuries, before bonding to a wizard. It is very similar to a phoenix in that respect. The fact it allowed you connect with it, especially with you being a wandless magic user, tells me that we should to expect great things from you."

"Father would accept no less." Blake quipped with a grin, as he accepted the wand back. It felt at home in his hand.

"That will be seven galleons, Young Master Knight." Ollivander requested.

Blake reached into his pocket and withdrew the money his father had given him. "Have a good afternoon, Mr. Ollivander."

"You as well." Ollivander said with a nod of his head, as he put the coins in the register.

Blake gave the man a smile, before pocketing his wand and exiting the shop. When he stepped out into the afternoon sun, he found his father and Auror Shacklebolt locked in an intense staring contest. A heavy tension hung between the two. It was clear that something had occurred between them, while he was buying his wand.

"Where are we going now?" Blake asked curiously and purposefully stepped in front of his father.

His father looked down at him, and his face instantly softened. "How'd it go?"

"I was a tricky customer." Blake told him with a grin. He fished his wand out of his pocket and held it out to his father.

Tomas took the offered wand and examined it closely. After a moment, a contemplative look crossed his face. "This is not a Galvin Ollivander design."

"He said that his grandfather made it." Blake said with a shrug. He said nothing more about it, as he was very aware of the Auror standing behind him.

"Well, that is something." Tomas said musingly. He studied it a minute more, before handing it back to Blake. "Let's go get your books, after doing that we can get your cauldron, scales, and telescope."

Blake nodded in agreement and fell into step next to his father. Auror Shacklebolt followed after them. Blake ignored the apprehensive crowd around them. Instead, he turned his attention to the different shops that they passed, as they weaved their way down the Alley. There was a jokes shop, Gamble & Japes, advertising a new line of prank products. There was a pet shop, Magical

Menagerie, which had several animals on display. An ugly orange kitten was sitting in the window. Blake thought that it look like someone had shut a door on the poor thing's face. He got his question as to where common people bought their robes, when they passed by Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions.

"Can we get ice cream?" Blake asked hopefully, when he saw Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlor.

"I think you already know the answer to that." Tomas said shaking his head.

"Oh, come on." Blake begged.

"Ten." Tomas told him challengingly.

"Five." Blake challenged back.

"Ten." Tomas said pointedly.

"Seven." Blake bargained.

"Eight." Tomas said, daring Blake to disagree.

"Really?" Blake asked perturbed. He couldn't believe he would have to run eight laps for an ice cream cone.

"If you want ice cream, the number is eight." Tomas said seriously. "That stuff is very unhealthy."

Blake glanced over to the ice cream parlor with a thoughtful look, before he sighed in resignation. "Forget it. You're right. I don't need it."

It was only a few minutes later that they reached Flourish and Blot's. Upon entering, they saw that the bookstore was relatively empty. There were only a few people mulling about between the many shelves. Blake read the different book titles on one of the displays near a small sitting area. A book called Raven Docket: the Adventure of Louie caught his eye. He was about to go check it out, when Tomas caught his arm. He looked back and met his father's stern eyes.

"Keep yourself out of trouble." Tomas said meaningfully. His eyes flickered over to an elderly woman and a blond haired boy. Blake followed his gaze. He recognized the blond boy as being Neville Longbottom. He looked back to his father.

"Yes sir." Blake answered with a nod. He understood the true meaning of his father's words. He was to stay away from Longbottom. They had enough bad press. The last thing they needed was a confrontation the wizarding world's golden boy. Over the last few months, Blake had seen the boy's face in the Daily Prophet several times. There was a big stir about the Boy-Who-Survived attending his first year of Hogwarts. The way his father explained it, Neville was the poster boy for the Light. After Harry Potter's 'death', Neville had gained attention for surviving the Cruciatus Curse, when he was just a little over a year old. It seemed at the time that the press was looking for a new 'Child Savior' to harp on about. The fact that Neville's birthday was only a day before Harry Potter's, and that his family was attacked only days after the Potters, clearly had an influencing in it all.

"I'll get your course books. Go ahead and look around." Tomas told him, before stepping further into the shop.

Blake watched Auror Shacklebolt follow after his father. The man seemed more alert than before. His brown eye's watched his father closely, and periodically, he shot glances back at him. He decided to ignore the man and went over to look at the book that had previously caught his attention. He picked it up and flipped it over, so he could read the back.

Raven Docket has a good life. His father works for the Ministry of Magic in the Department of International Magical Cooperation. His mother stays home to look after him and his little sister, Amelia. However, his simple life is about to change. A griffin, by the name of Louie, has decided to make Raven's backyard his new home. It's up to Raven to get Louie to leave. Louie doesn't want to go, but he is willing to makes a deal with Raven. If Raven can fulfill the deal, Louie

promises to leave the Dockets alone to live their lives in peace. Follow Raven,
as Louie leads him on an adventure that he will not soon forget.

"I've read it. It's pretty good." A voice said from behind him.

Blake turned around to see Neville Longbottom standing in front of him. He internally groaned at his luck. He was told to stay away from Neville, and now the blond boy just walks right up to him.

"Louie's really funny." Neville continued. He stopped and stared at Blake, clearly waiting for a response. When he didn't get one, a contemplative look crossed his face. After a minute, he stuck out his right hand and spoke again. "I'm Neville Longbottom."

Blake glanced around the store, but didn't see his father in the immediate area. He wondered if any harm would come from this encounter. He had been told that Neville was close to Albus Dumbledore, and the last Blake knew, Dumbledore was not his or his father's biggest fan. However, Blake knew better than to blow Neville off, as that would be considered highly rude. He took Neville's offered hand and shook it. "It's nice to meet you."

"You're Tomas Knight's son." Neville said knowingly. "Gran told me, when you came in."

"Yeah, I am. My name is Blake." Blake said with a polite smile, while he silently wondered why Neville was talking to him.

"My Gran and I are here getting my Hogwarts supplies early." Neville said with excitement. "Most people wait until August to get their stuff. The Alley usually gets really packed all month, and it's difficult to move in the crowds. Gran wanted to avoid all that, so we came now. I just got my letter this morning. What about you? Are you going to Hogwarts? Last Monday's Prophet said you wanted too, but Professor Dumbledore and the Board of Governors were still undecided."

"I got my letter this morning. My father and I are actually here getting my supplies." Blake said with his own excitement and relaxed a bit. It didn't seem like Neville wanted to cause any problems.

"That's great! Hogwarts is the best, or so I have been told." Neville said happily. "Hey, did you get a wand yet? Ollivander's was the first place Gran took me. Look." Neville pulled a dark brown wand out of his robes. "Gran wanted me to use my dad's old wand, but it wasn't a very good match. I'm glad it wasn't though. Mr. Ollivander said that the wand chooses the wizard, and that a handed down wand wouldn't have given me very good results. This one chose me. It's made of cherry and has a unicorn hair for its core."

"That's cool. We just came from Ollivander." Blake said with a grin. As far as he could tell, Neville was just bored, or maybe lonely, and wanted to talk to someone about Hogwarts. Blake looked around the shop again, but didn't see the elderly woman that was apparently Neville's grandmother. If he had to worry about someone, it would be her. "So, where is your Gran?"

"She went to talk to the owner about the latest Lockhart book." Neville said and wrinkled his nose.

"I heard he's a fraud." Blake said quietly in a conspiratorial tone.

"That wouldn't surprise me. I think he cares more about his smile than he does about Defense Against the Dark Arts." Neville said, before doing an imitation of the Lockhart's cheesy smile. Blake laughed lightly at his ridiculous impression.

"You're doing it wrong. It's more like this." Blake told him, before posturing his shoulders in an arrogant fashion. He gave Neville a wide, fake smile that showed off his teeth.

Neville laughed uproariously. He attempted to stifle his laughter with his hands, but he wasn't very successful. A few minutes passed, before he calmed down enough to speak. "Don't tell me that you've been taking lessons from him."

"Oh yeah, the going rate is 200 galleons for ten minutes." Blake said, while trying to hold a straight face. However, he soon dissolved into a fit of laughter along with Neville.

"You're pretty cool. Normally everyone just stares at me, or they go on and on about me being the Boy-Who-Survived." Neville said with a bit of disdain.

"Yeah, well, I have a feeling that I'll be having my own fair share of open ended stares, if today is anything to go by." Blake said with a shrug. "You do realize that you probably shouldn't be talking to me, right?"

"Why?" Neville asked with a puzzled look.

"You do know why it is such a big deal that my bloodline has resurfaced, don't you?" Blake asked seriously. He couldn't believe that no one told Neville about them. He was surprised that Neville's Gran hadn't warned him to stay away from them.

"Not really." Neville said, and shook his head.

"Look up the Knight name in the history books." Blake told him neutrally. The fact that Neville didn't know the truth about them was clearly why the blond boy had approached him. Blake knew if Neville did know the truth, he probably would have kept his distance. "It was great to make your acquaintance, Neville. However, I should really go find my father. I'll see you at Hogwarts."

"Yeah, okay." Neville agreed with a bit of confusion.

Blake offered a friendly smile, before he walked past the blond boy and set off to find his father. He didn't have to look far. His father was over by the checkout counter with several textbooks stacked up next to an antique register. It was apparent that he had been watching him for at least a few minutes.

"Making friends?" Tomas inquired, when Blake came over to him.

"Doubt it, not after he learns the truth." Blake said gloomily, as he looked back over his shoulder to Neville. "I told him to go look up our name in the history books. He probably won't want anything to do with me after he does."

"There will be others who won't judge." Tomas assured, and he gave Blake's right shoulder a comforting squeeze.

"Oh, can I get this?" Blake asked and held up the Raven Docket book that he been looking at.

Tomas took it from him and read the back cover. "A griffin named Louie?"

"Neville said it was good." Blake defended.

"Well, if Neville Longbottom said it was good." Tomas said teasingly, as he placed it on the pile of other books.

"Sorry about the wait, I was helping another customer." The owner apologized, as he came over to ring up their purchases.

It only took a few minutes to pay for all the books. They made a quick trip to the stationary shop that was next door and stocked up on parchment, quills, and ink. On their way to Mopsee's Cauldrons and More, they passed by Quality Quidditch Supplies. Blake caught sight of the newly released Nimbus 2000 through the group of children, who were all packed around the window display gushing over it.

"You do realize there will be a new broom out next year, and you can't take a broom with you to Hogwarts this year?" Tomas asked with a knowing look.

"I was just admiring it." Blake grinned impishly. He focused his attention back to the pathway in front of him.

"Uh...huh." Tomas said disbelievingly. "So the next words out your mouth were not going to be 'Dad, can I have one?'"

"Why would I ask you?" Blake said with false superiority. "I could always just ask Carter."

"I already told him to tell you 'no.'" Tomas said smugly.

Blake made an indignant noise. "That is so not fair."

"You'll live." Tomas said, rolling his eyes at Blake's dramatics. "Now, let's finish up this little shopping trip."

Blake let Tomas usher him into the cauldron shop. Auror Shacklebolt followed silently behind them. It didn't take long to pick out a pewter cauldron, a set of brass scales, and a nice telescope.

Tomas paid for the purchases, and they were back out in the sun lit alley once again.

"I believe that was the last of it." Tomas commented, as he pulled Blake's list from his pocket. He unfolded it and looked it over one last time. "You already have dragon hide gloves, and we have plenty of glass vials at home."

"So, we're done?" Blake asked hopefully.

"We're done. Ready to go or is there something else you wanted to do?" Tomas questioned.

"Nope, I'm good...for now." Blake said decisively, and he gave his father an innocent grin.

Tomas just shook his head and led the way back to the apparation point. When they reached it, they bid Auror Shackbolt goodbye. The Auror seemed relieved to finally be done with his assignment. Blake gave Diagon Alley one last glance, before he felt the familiar feeling of being pressed into a tiny tube. Upon arriving back at the Mansion, Tomas gave all their purchases to one of the house elves and instructed her to put them away.

"When's Carter getting here?" Blake asked curiously as soon as the elf popped away.

"Around 6:00." Tomas informed simply, before holding out his hand. "May I see your wand?"

Blake nodded. He retrieved his wand from his pocket and put it in his father's outstretched hand. His father remained silent, as he examined it more closely than he had before. Blake stood quietly, as he waited for what he would say.

"What is the wood?" Tomas asked curiously, as he ran his fingers along the wood's smooth surface.

"Hornbeam. The coloring is due to it being seal with phoenix ash. The core is a phoenix feather." Blake told him rapidly.

"A powerful combination. Though, I'm surprised that such a wand willing bonded to a wandless magic user." Tomas mused. "I could

barely use this, even if I really wanted to. Not only is the core a powerful one, it became greatly linked to the wood, when the phoenix's ash was sealed into it. Hornbeam is a very stubborn wood to wield. It will only work for those who can overcome it. It strengthened the will of the phoenix feather core."

"Ollivander said as much. He seemed just as surprised." Blake said with a shrug.

"Use it well, Blake. This wand is capable of doing amazing and terrible things. Remember, it is your choices that determine what it will do." Tomas said seriously, before offering the wand back to Blake.

Blake nodded and took back his wand. He pushed a small amount of magic into it, and he felt a soothing calm wash over him once again. He smiled at the feeling.

"You need to go finish your report about the Constitution of Clarendon." Tomas said pointedly and nodded to the dark marble stair case.

Blake sighed and pocketed his wand. He gave his father a brief hug, before heading up to his room. He had a lot to do in the next upcoming week. He wanted to look over the first few chapters of his text books. Then he needed to pack for Kenya. Plus, he still had some work to complete that his father had assigned to him last Monday. When he reached his room, he sat down at his desk. He pulled out the start of his essay from one of the side drawers, as he magically called the texts he was using for research off of his book shelf.

Alright, I hope you liked it. And before you panic...yes, I do know that you are going...what is up with Neville?...why doesn't Blake have the Holly wand? Yes, I am aware these things may be concerning some of you. So, here is where I will give you a little reminder.

For Neville: In the first chapter, Dumbledore decided that Harry Potter was dead, and that Neville would be the one to vanquish Voldemort. He told Augusta, that they need to help Neville become strong, confident, gracious, and noble. He suggest getting Neville used to the press, and being a focal point of the Light. Neville has

been living differently for the last three years than the one he lived in the canon. He has received a lot of encouragement from not only his Gran and Dumbledore, but from the wizarding public as well. It wouldn't have been likely that he remain a shy and nervous boy. I also don't believe he would turn into a spoiled brat and flaunt around that he was the Boy-Who-Survived. I think that Neville would have viewed the fame as Harry did. He earned his stardom from the fact he survived the torture of the Cruciatus Curse. He practically lost his parents that night, thanks to the same curse. I believe that Neville wouldn't care for the fame, but he would accepted it, as that is his nature. As we saw, later on in the Harry Potter series, Neville was actually quite inquisitive and bold. Therefore, the Neville you saw here is strongly based from the Neville we saw later on in books 5, 6, and 7.

For the wand: Point A, Blake no longer has a piece of Voldemort attached to him. Point B, he went through a blood adoption, adding the Knight's magic to his own. Point C, he has learned to have fairly good control over his magic. He is now the master of his magic. The core of the wand his magic chooses will only be a helper. All these things added up to me being unable to give Blake the Holly wand. It makes no sense for him to have the same wand, when his magic has been changed from what it originally was. I did, however, give him a phoenix feather core. I also gave him a 'significantly powerful' and 'special' wand, as Harry's Holly and Phoenix feather wand in the books was regarded as such. I also took into consideration that Harry had a strong connection with his wand in the books. The connect was due from his fierce loyalty to Dumbledore, which gave him a connection to Fawkes, who gave the feather to his wand. I previously explained that to a wandless magic user, a core is just a helper. Their magic has no dependence on the wand core. They don't actually have a deep connection to their wand, as they could technically use any wand to do their bidding. I wanted to give Blake a wand he would form a connection with. That is why his wand is the way it is. Yes? No? Maybe? Go ahead and tell me what you think.

Anyways...thanks so much for all the support that you gave in reading the first part. I hope you continue to enjoy the story. Remember I like to hear what you think, so I encourage you to drop a review. Special thanks to those who have reviewed so far.

ashbrooke; gauravmittal2; Saika Renegade; Therio; Memory King(7); Exiled Rain; Jobrmc; halofannumber1; Blah; Sawiuk;

MidNite Phoenix; MollyWeasleyObsessed; Songmuyang; Elfwyn(5);
Rori Potter; serpentine097(2); LifeMattersDoesntIt; Arsao Tome;
call015; Dreamweaver; ORKCHILD(2); Kayls Cullen(5); KoniK47(2);
SuperiorShortness(5);farwalker(4); Wondering Hail; Canuto-90;
phantomerick(3); spacecatdet; verox29(4); twilightserious;
Teufel1987(3); agouraki; Masterjedi1979; noodle-monster;
fhippogriff(2); Mistress of Magic22; Lientjuhh; Popdude125;
LanMandrager; firelordeg(2); EveryShiningStar(2);
bananacupcakes; Alec Blackheart; jimk; Spear-of-the-doomed;
silversnitch4765; vengeanceonu; Mourningstar13; Zurk; nachtdemon;
Alia-Jeys

Welcome to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Excitement and nervousness filled every part of Blake's being, as he marveled at the sight of the Hogwarts Express stationed on the tracks of Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$. Steam billowed out of the train's exhaust in puffy white clouds, and the morning sunlight reflected off of its coat of shiny red paint. Blake could hardly believe that September 1st had finally come, and that he was really going to Hogwarts.

"Let's get your trunk loaded, shall we?" Tomas asked from beside him.

Blake gave his father a wide grin and a nod.

"Alright, show me where you want to sit." Tomas said encouragingly.

Blake looked to the Express. Through the crowd of families on the platform, he could tell that the front and middle carriages of the train were filling up fast. Several people were moving in and out of them. Trunks and animal cages were being passed around, as student loaded their things.

"I think we should try the back." Blake suggested.

Tomas nodded his agreement. He put an arm around Blake's shoulder, as they moved away from the back pillars of the platform and into the crowd. Blake leaned further into his father, when people began to take notice of them. He hadn't liked the looks that people gave them, when they went to Diagon Alley for his school supplies, and he most definitely didn't like them now. The looks they received today seemed worse than the one they got before. They were met with many suspicious glares, instead of surreptitious glances. Blake pretended not to notice them, as he had done in the Alley. However, his nervousness increased tenfold.

Tomas sighed lightly and gave Blake's shoulder a comforting squeeze. He directed Blake through the crowd and to the last carriage, where he knew that they could find an empty compartment. When they boarded the train, they saw that a few lone students had already claimed a couple of the sections.

"Did you want to try and sit with anyone?" Tomas asked inquiringly.

"No." Blake said, shaking his head.

That was the answer that Tomas had expected. He led Blake to the very end of the train. They found the last compartment empty. Tomas ushered Blake inside. Blake sat down on the bench next to the window and looked out to platform. Meanwhile, Tomas pulled Blake's trunk out of his pocket and resized it. He took out Blake's book-bag, before levitating it into the luggage rack.

"Scared?" Tomas asked, as he kneeled down in front of Blake. He put the book bag down on the seat next to his son.

"A bit." Blake agreed, and he focused his attention on his father. "What if no one likes me?"

"You won't get along with everyone, but I am positive that you'll make lots of friends." Tomas assured with a soft smile. He brushed Blake's black bangs away from his eyes affectionately. Nick and Carter had suggested that Blake cut his hair that morning, as most students didn't wear their hair long. Blake didn't like the idea and a compromise had to be reached. Since Blake wouldn't let them cut his hair too short, it was now a medium length. When it was long, it had lost its wild look that came from James Potter. Though it wasn't untamable, it now had a slightly messiness to it.

"All those people, they don't seem that friendly." Blake said uncertainly, and he nodded out the window to the platform.

"They are reacting on what they know." Tomas said sadly. "They don't know us yet. Therefore, they don't trust us."

"What did Nick tell you this morning?" Blake asked concerned, as he continued to stare out the window. The crowd just seemed so much more unfriendly than it had before. He had seen Nick tell his father something, and as far as he could tell, it wasn't good news. He knew that the two had to be related.

"The night we left for Kenya, Gringotts was broken into. Luckily, the vault was emptied prior to the break in. However, the perpetrator managed to get away." Tomas said with a heavy sigh. "The Ministry has wanted to question me, concerning my whereabouts that night, for the last month. Seeing as we were in Kenya up until six hours

ago, they haven't been able to contact me, which has left many people unsettled."

"They think you did it?" Blake asked shocked and appalled. "How can they think that? You weren't even in Britain!"

"Don't worry about this, Blake." Tomas dissuaded. "I will make sure that things are set straight, before the day is out. I promise."

"You better send me a letter to let me know that they didn't find some excuse to throw you in Azkaban." Blake said pointedly.

"I won't be thrown in Azkaban. Though, I will send you a letter telling you all about it." Tomas assured, before giving Blake a smile. "Speaking of letters, I expect lots of them from you this year."

"I'll try to write at least once a week." Blake promised.

"Good." Tomas said satisfied. He then took hold of Blake's right hand and encompassed it with both of his own. He willed their connection to open, before he locked his eyes with Blake's. He could feel the small amount of fear Blake felt, along with his nervousness and excitement. However, his strongest emotion, as it always was, was how much he loved him. Tomas sighed sadly. "I'm going to miss you terribly."

"I'll miss you too." Blake whispered, before he leaned forward out of the bench seat and hugged his father tightly. Immediately, his father wrapped his arms around him. He burrowed into his father's chest and took in his sent. He knew that he wasn't going to get another hug for a long time. He knew that he was going to have to say goodbye now. He had a hard enough time telling Carter and Nick goodbye earlier that morning.

Tomas held his son close to him. He wasn't prepared to let go yet, but he knew that he had to. Nick had given him a two hour long lecture about doing what was best for his son, while Carter was helping Blake pack. He knew that Hogwarts was important to Blake. Not only did Blake really want to go, but it was Blake's blood right. He was the son of James and Lily Potter, as well as being his son. He knew that James and Lily would have wanted Blake to experience Hogwarts. He hugged Blake for a minute longer, before setting him back into his seat. When he looked into his son's face,

he could see in that Blake wasn't ready to let go either. He gave a reassuring smile, before he kissed Blake's forehead lovingly.

"This is goodbye, my little knight." Tomas said softly.

Blake just nodded. He didn't trust himself to speak.

"I love you." Tomas said with meaning, as he looked into his son's watery eyes. He had to use all his occlumency training, so that his emotion didn't betray him. Blake needed him to be strong at the moment.

"I love you, too." Blake said quietly, and a single tear rolled down his cheek.

Tomas wiped it away, before he reached down and took Blake's left hand in his. He ran his thumb over his son's Heir's Ring. "I'm just a call away if you really need me. I'll come as soon as I can."

Blake nodded his understanding, and the warning whistle sounded loudly over the platform.

"I'll be counting down the days until winter holiday." Tomas promised.

"I'll see you then." Blake agreed sadly.

His father gave him one last kiss on the forehead, before he stood up and exited the train. Blake watched him leave with a heavy heart. He turned to look out the window to the platform. He could see several families that were saying their last goodbyes, before their children hurried to get onto the train. He found his father in the crowd and waved to him. He got a wave back in return. It was only a minute more, before the train blew its final whistle and began to pull out of the platform. He watched out the window, as the train carried him further and further away from his father. He knew he was on his own now. A jolt of sadness, fear, and excitement rushed through him at that thought.

He took a deep breath to calm his nerves, and he sat back in his seat. He was really going to Hogwarts. He had dreamed of the castle for over a year, and now he was really going. He couldn't wait to get to there. He wanted to explore the halls that his birth parents had spent seven years of their short lives in. He was excited to set

foot in a place that had 1000 years of rich history. For 1000 years young witches and wizards had attended the school. Many of them went on to accomplish great things. Over those 1000 years, there had been several battles that had occurred on Hogwarts' grounds. There were several revolutionary meetings that had taken place within the castle's walls. It was where the first treaty with the goblins was drawn up. It was where witches and wizards fled during the witch hunts. The school was a pentacle for their society ever since it opened, and it was a place no Knight had set foot in for over 300 years. Blake knew that today would be marked in the Knight's history, and that his name would be significant to the Knight bloodline for generations to come.

He turned to his book-bag that sat in the seat next to him. He took out his Defense Against the Dark Arts text and opened it to the second chapter. He needed something to distract his mind. It would do him no good to let his mind wander, until it found something to dwell on. He was already missing his father, Carter, and Nick. Then there was the Gringotts break in. His father would be going to the Ministry right now, if he wasn't there already. He trusted his father that everything would be alright. However, he couldn't help but worry. Minister Fudge had made it no secret that the first chance he got, Tomas Knight would be carted off to Azkaban.

Blake knew that he shouldn't think on it. He would only stress himself out for no reason. He also knew that letting himself get over excited about finally going to Hogwarts, would only make the train ride pass by that much slower. He made his mind focus on the words on the pages in front of him, and soon enough, he was enraptured by the defensive theory that the book outlined. He didn't even notice those, who were still roaming the halls, looking for seats. He didn't see them look into his compartment through the window, before moving back up the train.

Time passed by silently for Blake, as the train continued to speed down its tracks. He found his defense book to be very informative. After a while, he got his leather bound notebook out of his book-bag, along with a self-inking quill. He took notes on what he was reading, as the book began to discuss the actual use of defensive spell in different situations. Sometime later, he was startled out of his work, when there was a knock on his compartment door, before it was slid open. He looked up to see an elderly lady standing in the doorway with a cart of sweets behind her.

"Anything off the trolley, dear?" She asked him kindly.

"No thank you, ma'am." Blake told her politely.

The old lady gave him a smile, before she shut the compartment door. Noting that he was getting hungry, Blake took out the lunch that Riana, their kitchen elf, had packed for him. When he opened the plastic container, steam pour out of it, as his meal had been placed under a warming charm. Blake set the meal out in front of him, and removed a bottle of chilled milk from his book-bag. He ate his food, while thinking about what the meals at Hogwarts would be like. Carter had told him about a lot of rather unhealthy foods, but had assured him that there were plenty of other things for him to eat that were healthy. According to both Nick and Carter, the food at Hogwarts was some of the best that they ever had.

When he finished his lunch, he put his defense book away and got out his book for Transfigurations. He dove into its pages with great interest, as he hadn't been able to look at it yet. Though he had done his animagus transformation, he knew that it wasn't the same as wand transfigurations. With the animagus transformation, he had to concentrate on the feeling of his inner animal and bring it forward enough to manifest. He then had to concentrate on the image of animal that he knew he would become, before willing himself to transform into that animal. He had watched his father turn one thing into another, make certain things disappear, and make other things appear out of thin air for years now. He could clearly see that wand transfigurations required something different than the animagus transformation. Not only did it require wand movements and words, but it also wasn't based on unleashing the feeling of an animal inside him.

Another few hours passed by. Blake was deeply immersed into his book, when the compartment door was opened abruptly. Blake raised an enquiring eyebrow, upon seeing a boy with slicked back, white blonde hair standing in the open doorway. He had two goons standing behind him, who seemed to only be standing there for the pure purpose of looking imposing. The blond took a few steps into the compartment.

"Malfoy, Draco Malfoy." The blond boy said, with no small amount of arrogance. He held out his hand to Blake.

"Blake Knight." Blake introduced politely and shook Draco's hand.

"I know. Word is all up and down the train of you being in this compartment." Draco said superiorly. "I'm here to let you know, Knight, that things are different from what they were 300 years ago, or however long your family cowered in hiding. Other families, better families, have risen to the top. I could give you a hand in avoiding making an even lower name for yourself, if you would like."

Anger boiled within Blake. He couldn't believe this boy had the gall to come into his compartment and deliver insult to him, while offering friendship at the same time. He gave the blond a hard look, before speaking in a slightly threatening tone. "You dare come in here and insult the Knight name. Clearly it is you, who needs the help in avoiding making an even lower name for yourself, Malfoy. I know all about your father, who is marked as nothing more than a servant. A disgrace to wizarding kind is what he is. I suggest you leave now, before you say something I won't be able to forgive."

"You think your name has any weight to it?" Malfoy asked jeeringly. "You're at the bottom of the barrel, Knight."

"If that is true, then why is the Ministry so scared of my father?" Blake asked coldly. "The Knight name was once feared and revered by all across Britain. There was a reason for that. Don't go thinking that a few centuries out of mainstream society has made my family weak. You should know, Malfoy, just because society didn't know of us, doesn't mean we weren't more than aware of society. That leaves us at the advantage, wouldn't you say?"

Draco sneered, but seemed to second guess himself. "See you at Hogwarts, Knight."

Blake watched with a mild-glare set on his face, as Malfoy turn on the spot and walk out of his compartment. The blond ponce had strongly reminded him of Dudley Dursley. Both shared the same attitude: they are the most important person on the planet, and everyone should be stumblingly over themselves in joy to be in their very presence. If Draco being a Malfoy wasn't enough incentive for him to want to stay away from the blond boy, then his attitude most definitely was. Blake sat back down on the bench seat, and picked up his book once again.

As the afternoon sun slowly lowered in the sky, Blake read on about basic transfigurations theory without further disruption. When the sunlight flooding the cabin began to fade and the sky took on a pinkish hue, he decided he should probably change to his Hogwarts robes. He put his book away, before getting into his trunk. He put his book-bag back where he had it packed originally and removed his uniform. He changed quickly out of his muggle street close and into the robes that he helped design during his visit to Twilfit and Tatting's earlier in the summer. He stored his trunk away once again and sat down. He looked out the window, as his excitement and nervousness came back to him full force, watching the ancient looking trees fly past and the sun lower in the sky.

It was only a ten minutes later that a voice echoed throughout the train. "We'll be reaching Hogsmeade in five minutes' time. Please leave your luggage on the train. It will be taken to the school separately."

Almost exactly on the five minute mark, the train began to slow, as it pulled into Hogsmeade Station.

Blake excited his compartment, so he could wait in the hall to deboard the train. He found that several other people had the same idea as he did. The noise level and air of excitement of the students, only served to heighten his anticipation. In just minutes, he would set foot inside Hogwarts Castle. He would enter the Great Hall, where his parents ate three meals a day for seven years, where Godric Gryffindor and Salazar Slytherin dueled during their final disagreement. The minute that it took for the train to stop completely seemed to take forever. Blake sighed in relief, when he was finally able to exit the Express onto the platform of Hogsmeade Station. He had no sooner stepped out into the chilling night air, when he heard a booming voice call over the crowd.

"Firs' year! Firs' years over here!"

He looked around, and his eyes widened. The booming voice belonged to the largest man that he had ever seen. The man towered over the crowd of students getting off the train and was at least twice as tall as any of the seventh years. He had a large, brown, fluffy beard, which twitched every time he spoke. The lamp he held in his hand shined like a beacon over all the students. Blake

headed over to him and joined the group of his year mates, who had already gathered around the man.

"C'mon, follow me, anymore firs' years? Mind yer step, now! Firs' years follow me!" The man called loudly, as he began to lead the way down a steep and narrow path.

Everyone slipped and stumbled a bit in the darkness. The path was very uneven and didn't seem like it was used too often. Blake looked off to the side of the path, and he could see nothing but never ending ancient forest. He couldn't help but wonder where the large man was taking them. They all remained quiet, as they concentrated on making it down the slope without falling. On a particularly steep part, the red haired girl in front of him tripped. He quickly caught her arm and righted her, before she could fall completely. She gave him a grateful smile.

"Yeh'll get yer firs' sight o' Hogwarts in a sec." The large man said loudly over his shoulder. "Jus' round this bend here."

Blake heard those in front of him ooh and ah. When he reached the part where the path widened, he found out why. He was faced with a great black lake, whose surface was as smooth as glass and reflecting the starry night sky. On the other side of it, set atop a high mountain, was Hogwarts Castle. Its windows were lit up brightly, and its towers jutted up into the air with prestige. Blake found the sight of it quite impressive.

"No more'n four to a boat!" The large man told them, and indicated to a fleet of little boats that were sitting along the shore of the lake.

Blake climbed into the closest one and was followed by a blond haired girl, a dark skinned boy, and a mousy haired boy.

"Everyone in?" The large man asked, as he took one boat all to himself. "Right then...FORWARD!"

The boats moved away from the shore all at once. Blake smiled to himself, when the mousy haired boy beside him jump and look around in wonder. The boy looked over the side of the boat, as they glided across the smooth surface of the lake without causing so much as a ripple in the water.

"Magic." Blake told the boy amusedly.

The boy grinned widely and looked up at the castle that they were slowly approaching. It towered over them, and it seemed to grow larger and larger, as they got closer to the cliffs.

"Heads down!" The large man yelled, when they were at the base of the cliffs. Everyone ducked, and the curtain of ivy brushed over them gently. Behind it was a wide opening in the cliff face. The boats moved through a dark tunnel that seemed to run directly underneath the castle, before they finally came to a stop in what appeared to be an underground harbor. They all climbed out of their boats and onto the rocky shore.

"Follow me!" The man instructed and began to lead them up a passageway in the rock. After a bit of a walk, they came out onto the grassy ground at the base of the massive castle. They were led up a flight of stone steps to a set of large oak doors.

"Everyone here?" The man asked and looked back at them. When he seemed satisfied, he raised one of his giant fists to knock three times on the castle doors.

Blake, along with the others, eagerly craned their necks to see inside, when one of the doors swung open almost instantly. They were met with the sight of a tall, black haired witch, who was wearing emerald green robes. Oval rimmed glass adorned her face, along with a stern scowl. Blake knew who she was almost instantly. Carter had described her well. He had told him that she was not one to be crossed, and Blake had to agree whole heartedly. He could tell just from the way she held her shoulders that she didn't put up with nonsense.

"The firs' years, Professor McGonagall." The large man said proudly.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here." She said and pulled the door all the way open. She then indicated for them to follow her into the castle.

Blake looked in awe at the entrance hall. It was a large, wide open space that expanded upward for many floors. Torches were lit all along the stone walls, and the staircase facing them was made from a beautiful marble. However, all that held no meaning to him. He

had seen plenty magnificent and expensive things over the last three years. What awed him was the fact that he was finally setting foot into a place where James and Lily Potter had spent a good portion of their lives.

Blake, along with the other first years, followed Professor McGonagall across the flag stone floor and into a small, empty chamber that was off the hall. Blake stood next to the blond girl and the dark skinned boy from the boat, once they were all gathered inside.

"Welcome to Hogwarts." Professor McGonagall greeted. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend free time in your house common room.

"The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup, a great honor. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours.

"The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting."

Blake noticed that her eyes lingered off to the right. When he followed her gaze, he saw a red haired boy standing next to Neville, who had a splotch of dirt on his nose.

"I shall return, when we are ready for you." Professor McGonagall told them and then added. "Please wait quietly."

As soon as she was gone, various voices broke out in the crowd. Excitement and nervousness could be heard throughout the chamber.

"Blaise Zabini." The dark skin boy introduced and offered his hand to Blake.

"Blake Knight." Blake responded and politely shook the boy's hand.

"I know." The boy said with a smirk.

"Daphne Greengrass." The blond girl introduced, as her green eyes assessed both of them.

"It is lovely to make your acquaintance, Miss Daphne." Blake said, as he took her offered hand. He bent down and kissed her knuckles. When he looked up at her face, he saw a light tint of pink on her cheeks. He released her hand, and stood straight once again. Blaise gave him an odd look. Blake raised an eyebrow at him in response. "Is it not the proper way to greet a Lady?"

"It is. Though, it's not something of common practice these days." Blaise answered simply.

"Who knew that true gentlemen still existed?" Daphne said, while giving Blake an approving look.

Blake was about to respond, when he was interrupted by screams. He looked around, and saw that there were several ghosts floating through the far chamber wall. The ghosts seemed pay them no mind, as they glided across the room.

One, who looked like a fat little monk, spoke in a reasoning way to the others that were floating along beside him. "Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance – "

"My dear Friar, haven't we given Peeves all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you know, he's not really even a ghost – I say, what are you all doing here?" A ghost wearing a ruff and tights asked, as it seemed he had finally noticed that they were there.

"New students!" The Fat Friar exclaimed and smiled down at them. "About to be Sorted, I suppose?"

A few people nodded, but most just openly stared in response.

"Hope to see you in Hufflepuff!" The Friar said excitedly. "My old house, you know."

"Move along now." A sharp voice interrupted. "The Sorting Ceremony's about to start."

Blake looked back towards the doors to see that Professor McGonagall had returned. The ghost quickly floated away through the opposite wall at her reprimand.

"Now, form a line." Professor McGonagall instructed them. "And follow me."

As they all lined up, Daphne graciously cut in front of him. Blaise rolled his eyes at her and took a spot behind him. They followed Professor McGonagall out of the chamber and across the entrance hall. When they entered the Great Hall, Blake drank it in. The vast room was lit up by thousands of floating candles. There were four long tables filled with students. All along them, there were gold plates and goblets, which glittered in the candle light. At the head of the hall, there was another long table that sat horizontally. The professors occupied this one. Though, that wasn't what captured his interest. It was the ceiling that he found fascinating. He had read about it in *Hogwarts, A History*, and it seemed every bit of amazing as it was described. He honestly couldn't even tell that the ceiling was there. It truly seemed like the Great Hall opened right up to the sky outside. He recognized it for the impressive bit of magic that it was. However, quickly his attention was drawn away from it and to the path in front of him.

Blake shuffled along with the other first years, as they were led to stand just before the professor's table. They were lined up, so that they were facing out to the seas of students, and they had the professors at their backs. Hundreds of faces stared up at them in the candle light. Blake felt his stomach flip in nervousness, as he watched Professor McGonagall set out a four-legged stool in front of them. She placed an old, pointed wizard's hat on top of it. He grimaced at the sight of the dingy hat. It had several patches, and was frayed along the edges. Though, that wasn't the problem. The problem was that it looked like someone had dropped it in the mud, and never cared to clean it off. He knew his father would not approve. He was debating on whether to actually allow them to put the thing on his head, when its brim opened up and it began to sing:

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty
But don't judge on what you see
I'll eat myself if you can find
A smarter hat than me
You can keep your bowlers black
Your top hats sleek and tall
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat
And I can cap them all
There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be
You might belong in Gryffindor
Where dwell the brave at heart
Their daring, nerve, and chivalry
Set Gryffindors apart
You might belong in Hufflepuff
Where they are just and loyal
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true
and unafraid of toil
Or yet in wise Ravenclaw
If you've a ready mind
Where those of wit and learning
Will always find their kind
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You'll make your real friends
Those cunning folk use any means
To achieve their ends
So put me on! Don't be afraid!
And don't get in a flap!
You're in safe hands (though I have none)
For I'm a Thinking Cap!"

When the song ended, applause broke out through the whole hall. Blake watched with amusement, as the Hat bowed to the different house tables. While he had listened to the song, he had come to the conclusion that the Hat actually liked looking like a scraggly mess. It was clear to him that the thing had its own personality. He found that aside from its appearance, he actually like the Hat.

"I can't believe we actually have to put that thing on." Daphne hissed with disdain. "It's absolutely filthy."

"I don't think that it will let anyone clean it." Blake whispered with a grin.

"My mother wouldn't let something like that even come into our house." Blaise said seriously.

Daphne looked like she was about to make a retort, when Professor McGonagall stepped forward holding a long roll of parchment. She cleared her throat loudly, which effectively silenced the hall.

"When I call your name, you will put on the Hat and sit on the stool to be sorted." She informed them. "Abbott, Hannah!"

A girl with curly blond pig tails nervously walked forward and put the Hat on her head. It fell down over her eyes, as she sat down on the stool. After a moment's pause the Hat shouted out. "HUFFLEPUFF!"

The table to the right of the center aisle cheered loudly. The blond girl eagerly took the Hat off and took her place at her house table.

"Bones, Susan!"

A small red haired girl that Blake recognized, as the one he had prevented from falling earlier, sat down on the stool. She carefully placed the Hat on her head. It was only a minute later, when the Hat called out. "HUFFLEPUFF!"

The girl went to join Hannah Abbott at her house table.

"Boot, Terry!"

A brown haired boy stepped out of line and strode up to the stool. He no sooner got the Hat on his head, when it yelled. "RAVENCLAW!"

The table on the left side of the center aisle broke out in loud applause. Terry ripped the Hat off his head and went to join his house.

"Brocklehurst, Mandy!"

A girl with dark brown hair stepped up and placed the Hat on her head. A few seconds later it shouted. "RAVENCLAW!"

The girl smiled brightly, as she took off the Hat and then went her house table.

"Brown, Lavender!"

A girl with wavy blond hair stepped out of the line, just a few places down from Blake. The Hat took a minute, before it announced. "GRYFFINDOR!"

The table on the far left broke out in loud shouts of welcome and applause. The girl placed the Hat back on the stool, before she bounced off to join her house.

"Bulstrode, Millicent!"

A girl with dull black hair sat down on the stool. The Hat debated a moment, before shouting out. "SLYTHERIN!"

The table on the far right welcomed her, though they seemed less enthusiastic than the other houses.

The assigning of houses continued to move along, as Professor McGonagall called out name after name. Blake paired up the names with the owner's face and noted the house that they went into.

"Corner, Michael!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Cornfoot, Stephan!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Crabbe, Vincent!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Davis, Tracey!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Entwhistle, Kevin!"

Blake recognized the boy, as the one who sat next to him in the boat. The Hat was only on his head for a moment before it yelled out. "RAVENCLAW!"

"Fay Dunbar, Rachel!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Finch-Fletchley, Justin!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Finnigan, Seamus!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Goldstein, Anthony!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Goyle, Gregory!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Granger, Hermione!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Greengrass, Daphne!"

Daphne took a nervous step forward, before she walked confidently up to the stool and placed the Hat on her head. After a few minutes it called out. "SLYTHERIN!"

She took off the Hat with an impassive face and joined her house.

"Hopkins, Wayne!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Jones, Megan!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Kellah, Nicola!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Knight...Blake!"

The hall hushed to a dead silence. Blake took a deep breath, before he stepped forward with an air of confidence. He ignored the pointed stares and how several professors leaned forward in their seats. He calmly walked up to the stool and sat down. He placed the Sorting Hat over his head and closed his eyes.

'Hmm...interesting. Though, you are blocking many thoughts from me child.' The Hat projected into his mind.

'I figured I would deliver you a reminder first.' Blake thought back to it.

'Oh, and what may that be?' The Hat asked snidely.

Blake said nothing, but focused on the magic of his Heir's Ring. The Hat twitched.

'I see. I assure you Young Knight, that nothing I see in your mind will be shared with another.' The Hat promised.

'You know how this works, Hat. I want the oath.' Blake thought pointedly.

'I haven't made one in over two hundred years, but it is your right to ask for it.' The Hat assented. 'I, Gideon, the Sorting Hat of Hogwarts, the Noble Hat of Gryffindor, swear upon my destruction that nothing in Blake Alexander Knight's head will ever be reveal to any other.'

'Thank you.' Blake thought happily, as his Heir's Ring sealed the given oath. Blake then unblocked his mind fully.

The Hat actually gasped out loud, as it initially looked through brief glimpse of his memories. Blake sat silently and waited for it to do its

thing. It seemed to decide to actually take the time to fully look at some of the memories swimming around in his head.

'An extraordinary life you have led, Young Knight. I see that accepting Lord Knight's offer was truly the better option for you.' The Hat thought sincerely, after it watch several brief memories of what his life was like at the Dursley's. 'Now the question is where to put you? Is there any house you have no desire for?'

'It is nothing against the house necessarily. It is more about the way that others view it.' Blake started.

'Ah, I see. I do agree that placing you in Slytherin would be detrimental to the Knight family gaining trust.' The Hat agreed, as it instantly picked up the memory of the discussion he had with his father. They had decided that Slytherin had to be avoided at all costs. It would simply project the wrong image. 'You would fit well there. I can see it all here. You have plenty of cunning. You have plenty of ambition. You are also very powerful. Salazar would have been pleased to have you in his house.'

'As I said, it isn't my opinion. It is the others. I would have been proud to be placed there.' Blake thought sincerely.

'I see you have favor to Ravenclaw, but I'm afraid you are a bit too far on the wild side for them.' The Hat said, as it reviewed a memory of him jumping off the ending platform of the Course into the pool 40 ft below. 'You are definitely clever enough for that house, but that is not where you truly belong.'

Blake was a bit disappointed, but he knew that he was a tossup from the start. He knew that there was a chance he wouldn't be in Ravenclaw. He waited in silence once again, as the Hat sifted through several more memories. It looked at several moments where he showed fierce loyalty to his father and to the Knight name. After watching what he told his father in Godric's Hollow Cemetery almost a year ago, it move on. It sorted through many scenes of him studying hard and striving to achieve more than he had before. It watched brief glimpses of his trek up to the top of Mt. Kenya.

'Interesting,' The Hat said thoughtfully, 'you wanted to climb the mountain for the adventure, but also for the achievement. You wanted it to mean something, when you stood on the summit. You

see that just apparating to the top would be to achieve nothing. Hufflepuff is a very viable option. Though, I see a lot of Gryffindor in you. Your parents' house would suit you well. You hold honor and nobility highly. Moreover, you have daring and nerve in amounts I have not seen for a few years now. There are not many out there, who would willingly walk up to a dragon and pet it, not even a baby dragon. The fact you wish to do the same with an adult dragon, is outstanding. So, which house do you think is best for you?

'Isn't that your job, Mr. Thinking Cap?' Blake thought cheekily. He honestly didn't care either way. He knew the Hat was the one who would actually decide in the end.

'Oh, I know just what to do with you.' The Hat said positively. 'You would have made James Potter proud in...GRYFFINDOR!'

Blake smiled, as he hopped off the stool and took off the Hat. The hall seemed to be in two different states, half seemed to be in shock and the other half appeared to be just waking up. The Gryffindors began to clap in an unorganized applause, as he came over to join them. He sat himself down next to a bushy haired girl, who had waved him over.

"Li, Su!" McGonagall called, getting the sorting moving along once again.

A girl of Asian descent stepped up and placed the Hat on her head. The Hat debated a moment, before it shouted. "RAVENCLAW!"

The girl happily removed it and took her spot with her fellow eagles.

"Longbottom, Neville!"

The entire hall perked up, and several whispers broke out. The blond boy nervously took a seat on the stool and lowered the Hat onto his head. It was only a moment later, when the Hat yelled out. "GRYFFINDOR!"

Neville smiled grandly, as he removed the Hat from his head. He ignored the deafening roar of the entire hall, as he walked over to the Gryffindor table and sat down across from Blake. A sandy haired boy, who Blake remembered as being announced as Seamus Finnigan, shook Neville's hand enthusiastically. He wasn't the only one.

Everyone at the table seemed to want to talk to Neville. Blake focused his attention back on the sorting, as Professor McGonagall called out.

"Macmillian, Ernie!"

As soon as the Hat touched the brown haired boy's head, it shouted. "HUFFLEPUFF!"

"McDougal, Morag!"

A petite blond girl staggered up to the Hat. After a few minutes debate, it yelled out. "RAVENCLAW!"

"Malfoy, Draco!"

Blake watched, as the blond strutted up to the stool and sat down. The Hat didn't even make it all the way on to his head before shouting. "SLYTHERIN!"

"Malone, Emily!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Moon, Lillian!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Nott, Theodore!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

Parkinson, Pansy!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Patil, Padma!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Patil, Parvati!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Perks, Sally-Anne"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Rivers, Mathew!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Roper, Samantha!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Runcorn, Allen!"

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Smith, Zacharias!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Spinks, Jessica!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Thomas, Dean!"

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Turpin, Lisa!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

"Weasley, Ronald!"

The red headed, who had the smudge of dirt on his nose, looked like he had just been force fed a vial of Skele-Gro. He hesitantly walked up to the stool and sat down. After a moment, the Hat shouted. "GRYFFINDOR!"

The boy sighed with relief, as he removed the Hat. He rushed over to join Blake's table and sat down in the open spot that Neville made for him.

"Zabini, Blaise!"

The dark skinned boy was the last to be called. He calmly walked up and sat down on the stool. Soon enough, the Hat yelled out. "SLYTHERIN!"

Blake saw a smirk on Blaise's face, as the boy walked over to the Slytherin table and sat down next to Daphne Greengrass.

Professor McGonagall quickly rolled up the scroll and took the Sorting Hat away. When she was seated at the Head Table, Albus Dumbledore stood up with his arms stretched wide in a clear sign of welcome. He seemed truly delighted to see all of them, as he beamed down at them. The hall fell silent and gave him their full attention.

"Welcome!" He greeted. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

Applause broke out as soon as the Headmaster sat back down. Blake clapped along politely and tried to process the Headmaster's strange behavior. The Headmaster's eyes connected with his for a brief moment, as he stared up at him. Blake looked away quickly. It was only a moment later that dinner appeared on the tables. Blake loaded up his plate with roasted turkey, steamed vegetables, and a portion of baked sweet potatoes. He poured himself a glass of fresh ice water.

"That does look good." The ghost in a ruff said sadly, over Neville's shoulder.

"Can ghosts eat?" Parvati asked curiously, when no one else spoke up.

"I haven't eaten for nearly four hundred years. " The ghost informed them. "I don't need to, of course, but one does miss it. I don't think I've introduced myself? Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington at your service. Resident Ghost of Gryffindor Tower."

"I know who you are!" Ronald said abruptly. "My brothers told me about you – you're Nearly Headless Nick!"

"I would prefer you to call me Sir Nicholas de Mimsy –" The ghost began stiffly.

"Nearly Headless? How can you be nearly headless?" Seamus Finnigan cut in.

Blake noticed that the ghost seemed a bit annoyed by the turn the conversation had taken.

"Like this." Sir Nicholas proclaimed tetchily, as he took hold of his ear and pulled on it. His whole head swung off his neck and fell onto his shoulder. It appeared, as if it were on a hinge. The ghost seemed pleased at the shocked he had instilled in them. He righted his head and coughed. "So...new Gryffindors! I hope you're going to help us win the house championship this year? Gryffindors have never gone so long without winning. Slytherins have got the cup six years in a row! The Bloody Baron's becoming almost unbearable – he's the Slytherin ghost."

Blake glanced to the Slytherin table with the rest of his dorm mates. His attention went to a ghost hovering next to Draco Malfoy at the Slytherin table. His eyes seemed blank, his face was gaunt, and his robes were stained with silver blood. He looked very unpleasant, when compared to the other ghosts who were spread throughout the hall.

"How did he get covered in blood?" Seamus asked with great interest.

"I've never asked." Sir Nicholas said carefully, before he bid them goodbye and floated further up the table to chat with some of the older years.

"Your sorting took forever." The bushy haired girl commented, while looking directly at Blake.

"I suppose it did." Blake shrugged, before taking a bite of his sweet potatoes.

"I'm Hermione Granger." The girl introduced. Before Blake could even respond, she rambled on. "I read about your family in A History

of Magic. Is it true that your family led a siege against the Ministry of Magic?"

Those of a proper wizarding background froze in their movements, and Blake just stared at her. He couldn't believe she just asked him that. It was hardly an appropriate topic for discussion at the moment.

"I take it you are a muggleborn." Blake said slowly, and she gave him a tentative nod in response. "The answer to your question is yes. However, now I ask that you do not ask me anymore questions of that nature."

She looked around herself and seemed to understand that she made some sort of faux pas. She nodded her head in reluctant agreement.

They all settled into eating their meals after that. Blake had to ignore the carnivorous noises of Ronald Weasley, who was sitting almost directly across from him. He had read about the Weasley family in The Book of Purebloods. They had very little wealth and very little standing. The last Weasley to claim the title Lord Weasley was a century and a half back. Upon his death, he laid out guidelines that needed to be fulfilled, before his wayward son would be allowed to claim Lordship. The son never fulfilled them, and no Weasley had bothered trying to fulfill them since. This left them with inaccessible holdings and an empty chair on the Wizengamot. It was the Weasley's carelessness about the title they once held that irked most of Britain's pureblood society. They were generally noted for lacking in proper manners and knowledge of old customs. Blake knew that the knowledge of such things was most likely lost with the wayward son, who refused to fulfill his duties. The family seemed content to live their lives without bothering with pureblood society.

Blake looked up the table to another red head boy that he had noticed earlier. He figured that the boy had to be Ronald's brother, as he had congratulated him on his sorting with familiarity. Not to mention, they looked similar. This Weasley seemed to at least understand the concept of chewing his food. Also, he didn't have dirt smudged on his face. Blake noted the Prefect's badge that the boy wore. It would appear that the boy had at least claimed some sort of standing within the school. The differences between the two Weasleys intrigued him greatly. Ronald, from what he could tell, was

the picture that The Book of Purebloods depicted, but the older Weasley didn't seem to truly fit the description.

"Dean, would you mind terribly to switch me spots?" Blake asked the dark skinned boy, who was sitting next to the elder Weasley.

"Uh...no." Dean agreed unsurely, and got up from where he was sitting. He grabbed his plate and goblet to bring with him. He quickly traded spots with Blake.

Blake sat down in between the Prefect and Lavender Brown. He turned to the elder Weasley and held out his hand to him. "Blake Knight."

"Percy Weasley, Gryffindor Prefect." Percy introduced purposefully, as he shook Blake's hand.

"I noticed." Blake said with a grin. "I take it you would be the one to talk to about all the tricks of the trade when concerning Hogwarts."

"Yes, I would be." Percy said importantly. "There is a lot to know about Hogwarts."

"Please do share." Blake requested.

Soon enough, he had Percy telling him everything there was to know about Hogwarts' day to day life. Percy told him about the classes he would be taking and gave him a brief overview of the professors teaching those classes. He learned that the two professors to definitely watch out for were Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape. Professor McGonagall upheld all the rules fairly, but strictly. Professor Snape had it out for anyone who was wearing Gryffindor robes. The man was quick to take points and hand out detentions for even the smallest of things. Percy advised him to tread carefully around the potions master. He also told him to watch out for Filch, the caretaker, and his cat Mrs. Norris.

Percy informed him of the quickest routes that would take him to and from his classes. He also warned him about the various trick steps in the many different staircases, which was a good thing. Carter had told him a lot of things. However, his Hogwarts experience was over five years ago, and he couldn't remember all the secret passageways to the different classrooms, every trick step, or where

there were pieces of loose flagstone. Nor was he too familiar with the professors. Professor Sinister and Professor Quirrell were new hires since his time. As for the others, he had described them well enough, though he didn't spend too much time on their bad sides. He didn't know what exactly made each tick, like Percy did. Though, Percy made it clear that he wasn't speaking from his own personal experience, but rather from the experience of his brothers, Fred and George, who made it a point to get on all the professors' nerves.

Percy seemed more than willing to share all his knowledge about the school, so Blake didn't stop him, as he explained about curfew. Percy proudly described the rounds that the Prefects, the Head Boy and Girl, and the Professors made at night. Blake estimated that that could be very useful information.

Eventually, the meal wound down and the desserts were served. Blake didn't see anything that took his interest. Well, he did, but he didn't want to have to pay for it later. Not to mention, he really shouldn't be eating the sugary treats to begin with.

"Don't you want dessert?" Percy asked, as he served himself a piece of treacle tart.

"No, I'm stuffed." Blake denied with a pleasant smile. "This is your OWL year, right?"

"Yes, I already have a study schedule all mapped out." Percy informed him. "I advise you to pay attention in your classes, Blake. Take good notes, and keep them organized. They will be very useful, when you get to your OWL year. I realized that this summer. Some of my notes got lost, and I've had to retake them out my old text books."

"Thanks for the advice. I'll keep that in mind." Blake said gratefully. "What OWLs are you hoping to score best in?"

"All of them." Percy said simply.

"You don't have any particular ones that you are looking to get the best scores in, so that you can put them towards a career?" Blake asked curiously.

"Well, I'm hoping to get a job in the Ministry and work my way up. It would be best to have good marks on all my OWLs and NEWTs." Percy explained, before taking a bite of his tart.

"Work your way up, like as in to become Minister?" Blake asked with a grin.

Percy blushed slightly. "Maybe not necessarily Minister...but a respectable position at least."

"You do realize there are more respectable positions than those of the Ministry, don't you?" Blake asked mischievously.

"None, which are available to me." Percy denied.

"Are you sure about that?" Blake questioned with an arched eyebrow. "You're of an old bloodline, are you not?"

"Yes, but what are you getting at?" Percy asked him cautiously, as he came back to the reality of who exactly he was talking to. He couldn't believe all that he had told Blake Knight. The kid had just put him at ease. He didn't even think about what Blake was asking, he just answered. He hadn't even told his family of his desire to become Minister of Magic someday.

"Do you really not know your own family's history?" Blake asked surprised.

"I-I...well we don't –" Percy said, before just shaking his head.

"You should make it a point to find out." Blake said simply.

Percy was going to respond, but was cut off by the food disappearing and Headmaster Dumbledore standing up once again.

"Ahem – just a few more words now that we are all fed and watered. I have a few start-of-term notices to give you. First years should note that the forest on the grounds is forbidden to all pupils. And a few of our older students would do well to remember that as well."

Blake notice Dumbledore's eyes resting on the Gryffindor table. He followed the man's gaze halfway down, to see a set of red headed twins that looked remarkably like Percy and Ron. Blake knew these

had to be the twin brothers that Percy spoke of, Fred and George. Blake's attention was drawn back to the Headmaster, as he began to speak once again.

"I have also been asked by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, to remind you all that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors. Quidditch trials will be held in the second week of the term. Anyone interested in playing for their house teams should contact Madam Hooch. And finally, I must tell you that this year; the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death."

Blake noted that Headmaster Dumbledore seemed completely serious. He would have to write his father and get his take on this new information. Judging from the whispers around him, this wasn't a common occurrence.

"And now, before we go to bed, let us sing the school song!" Headmaster Dumbledore said cheerfully. Though, he seemed to be the only staff member happy about it. The Headmaster flicked his wand and a long gold ribbon flew out of it. The ribbon floated up into the air and began to form words in a snakelike manner. Headmaster Dumbledore beamed at them. "Everyone pick their favorite tune...and off we go!"

"Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hogg Warty Hogwarts,
Teach us something please,
Whether we be old and bald,
Or young with scabby knees,
Our heads could do with filling,
With some interesting stuff,
For now they're bare and full of air,
Dead flies and bits of fluff,
So teach us things worth knowing,
Bring back what we've forgot,
Just do your best, we'll do the rest,
And learn until our brains all rot."

The hall was filled with hundreds of different voices, many different tones, several different tempos, and way too many off key notes. Finally, only the Weasley twins were left singing in a slow funeral march. Blake resisted the urge to laugh, as he watched the

Headmaster conduct them. He seemed to truly be enjoying himself. When the song finally finished, the hall burst into applause.

"Ah, music." Headmaster Dumbledore said and wiped his eyes. "A magic beyond all we do here! And now, bedtime. Off you trot!"

Percy got up immediately and called all of the first years' attention to him. "Follow me, first years. I will show you the way up to the Gryffindor dorms."

Blake stepped up beside him, as he began leading them out of the Great Hall. "Does Headmaster Dumbledore always act like that?"

"Not always, but in general." Percy affirmed, as he took them up the marble staircase. He then led them down a series of hallways, through many hidden doorways, and up several more flights of stairs.

Blake yawned, as they continued to climb farther and farther up into the castle. He had been up since 7:00 Kenya time, which was actually 4:00 British time. It was now very late and his adrenalin was waning. They had no sooner started down another hallway, when Percy brought them to a stop. Blake looked up to see a bundle of walking sticks floating over head. When Percy took a step forward, they pelted towards him.

"Peeves, a poltergeist." Percy whispered in way of explanation. He then raised his voice back to normal level and spoke commandingly. "Peeves – show yourself."

The answer he got in response was the sound of someone blowing a raspberry.

"Do you want me to go to the Bloody Baron?" Percy asked threateningly.

With a pop, a little man with dark eyes and a wide mouth appeared. He floated in front of them with his legs crossed and clutching the walking sticks with both hands.

"Oooooooh!" The poltergeist said, before giving an evil cackle. "Ickle Firsties! What fun!"

They all had to duck seconds later, as the ghost swooped down at them. He gave another evil cackle.

"Go away, Peeves, or the Baron'll hear about this, I mean it!" Percy ordered seriously.

Peeves stuck out his tongue at him, before he dropped the walking sticks on Seamus' head and then vanished. They could hear the coats of armor rattling down the hall, as he left them.

"You want to watch out for Peeves." Percy warned and began leading them down the hall once more. "The Bloody Baron's the only one who can control him, he won't even listen to us Prefects. Here we are."

They stopped, as they had reached the end of the corridor. In front of them was a portrait of a very fat lady, who was wearing a pink silk dress.

"Password?" She asked them.

"Caput Draconis." Percy said clearly. Instantly, the portrait swung out towards them. Behind it was a round hole in the wall. Blake followed Percy through it with the rest of the first years following after him. Blake looked around the Gryffindor common room. The place was decorated in the colors of red and gold. There were several squashy armchairs and tables spread throughout the room. Across from them was a nice fireplace that had embers burning within it. Overall it felt like a cozy place.

Percy wasted no time in sending the girls up to their dormitory through one of the doors off of the common room. He directed the boys to a door across from the one leading to the girls' dorms. Blake followed after Neville, Ronald, Seamus, and Dean. They climbed the spiral staircase all the way up to the top. When they entered their dorm, there were five four-poster beds arranged in a circular room. Blake noted that they must be in one of the towers. He saw his trunk at the end of a bed that was directly between the other four. He crossed over to it and pulled out his pajamas. He quickly found out that Ron was on one side of him, and Seamus was on the other.

Blake changed for bed in a sleepy haze. He was too tired to even think about staying up to write letters for his father, Carter, and Nick.

He would have to do it tomorrow. He crawled into the bed, pulled the blanket around him, and promptly fell asleep. It wasn't until thirty minutes later, when he was woken from his slumber by the sound of very loud snores, that he decided he needed to learn a few warding charms as soon as he possibly could. A silencing ward in particular. He tossed over to lie on his other side. Tonight was going to be a long night. He most definitely needed to know some sort of silencing ward, before he decided to go to bed tomorrow. Eventually, he grew so exhausted that he fell asleep regardless of the noise.

Alright...for Blake's House: You actually should have seen this one coming. The poll let me know how this would be received, and I hope some of you aren't too upset. However, I did say previously that I was basing my characters off of the essence of who they were in the canon. While Blake has changed a lot, he is still Harry Potter at the core. He is a Gryffindor. His bravery and nobility are the same as before. Harry was always smart. He just never applied himself. After all, Lily and James Potter were noted as being very intelligent people. Their child would be very bright as well. Tomas Knight encouraged Blake, while he was still young, to ask questions, to read books, and to learn all that he could. The Dursleys did the exact opposite. They told Harry he was worthless, probably got upset if he got better marks than their precious Diddydums, and I don't believe they put real stock in actually taking the time to learn. Harry also had fierce loyalty to his friends and didn't necessarily mind putting in the effort to get something he wanted. Blake has the same loyalty to his father and the Knight name. He has the same sense of hard work. Harry was a cunning and ambitious boy (whether some out there want to admit it or not). He deceived his Aunt and Uncle to sneak food, and eventually, to sneak his summer homework into his room as well. I can't even count how many times we watched Harry lied in the face of an authority figure. Then the whole seventh book showed his Slytherin side. Some of the plans they made were very underhanded and downright sneaky. The most notable being the breaks in at Gringotts and the Ministry. No way would they have survived that year hunting Horcruxes without Harry's Slytherin side. Harry was also very ambitious in wanting to destroy Voldemort and make a name for himself, one that he had actually earned. Not to mention, he was a very powerful wizard in the making. The Sorting Hat did not just see the essence of Tom Riddle in Harry. Harry was truly part Slytherin. Blake is very similar in that sense. However, both of them remain Gryffindor at their cores.

Anyways enough rambling. Thank you all so much for the reviews. I truly love them. Also, thank you for the story alerts & favorites, and the author alerts & favorites. Please continue to review, as I always love to hear what people think about my writing. It's odd that I have near 70,000 words written, and I'm going to tell you this is only the beginning. *grins* I'm really enjoying writing this, so I hope you are enjoying reading it.

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Classes Begin

Blake woke up the next morning severely disgruntled. The snores of his dorm mates seemed even louder than they had last night. He knew there was no possible way that he slept peacefully last night, not with all the noise. Not to mention, he was certain that he had only been asleep for a few hours, before his alarm woke him up. He tiredly crawled out of bed and went to the bathroom to get ready for the day. A half hour later, he was dressed in his school uniform and was slinging his book-bag over his shoulder. He briefly debated waking his dorm mates up, since they still weren't awake and breakfast would be starting in five minutes. In the end, he decided that they weren't his responsibility, and he left the dorm room.

On his way down to the Great Hall, Blake found the castle halls to be surprisingly empty. As he made his way through the maze of corridors and stairs, he tried to remember the path Percy had taken to bring them to Gryffindor tower and the various short cuts Percy had told him about the night before. Regardless, he still got all turned around somewhere on the fifth floor. Luckily, he was able to get help from one of the portraits. It turned out that he had gone left, when he should have gone right. He quickly found his way after that.

Blake decided to sit down at the very end of the Gryffindor Table, when he finally reached the fairly deserted Great Hall. The only table that was even close to being half filled was the Ravenclaw table. He set his book-bag down next to him and took out a scroll of parchment and a quill. He figured that while he had the time, he should write his father, Carter, and Nick. All of them would be very interested in which house he was sorted into. He set his quill to the parchment and began his letter.

Dear Dad,

I am now a proud lion of the Gryffindor house. During my sorting, I ended up having a rather interesting conversation with the Hat. You should see this thing. It looks absolutely dreadful. It is all patch up, frayed, and filthy dirty, but I think the thing actually likes being repulsive. Anyways, it said that I could be in almost any house, but that I was too excitable for the Ravenclaws. I don't know. I think Carter does a pretty good job of putting up with me.

The castle is amazing. The ceiling in the Great Hall really looks like it isn't even there. Also, the staircases move...a lot. I was walking down to breakfast this morning and suddenly the staircase switched. Twice, I had to find a different path to make my way down to the Great Hall. It's like they have a mind of their own. Oh, I talked to one of the Prefects last night and got him to tell me everything that Carter couldn't. Hopefully that will help keep me out of trouble, but I don't guarantee it.

His name is Percy Weasley, by the way. He has a younger brother named Ronald, who is in my year and is unfortunately someone I have to share a dorm with. He also has twin brothers named Fred and George, who are two years behind him. For being a Weasley, he was quite mindful of proper manners. His brother, Ronald, is completely clueless. I think Percy might have great potential in the future. I was wondering, if you would be okay with me helping him recover his heritage. He doesn't even know his family history. If he is to ever regain what is rightfully his by blood, then he is going to need a bit of guidance. As it is, he doesn't really know much about pureblood society. I would understand if you don't want me to cross that line. The Weasley's aren't exactly a prime family to make ties with.

Are they in any way connected to Dumbledore or the Ministry?

Anyways, as far as I can tell, Percy is the only one of true value. The twins, according to Percy, have no drive to do anything with their lives, besides cause trouble. Ronald is...lacking, to say the least. Or at least those are my observations so far.

Um...I had a confrontation with Draco Malfoy on the train. I kind of insult his family, but to be fair he insulted us first. I was just defending the Knight name...by taking a swing at the Malfoy name. Sorry if it ends up causing trouble, but he's lucky I didn't punch him. He said we were cowering in hiding and that we were at the bottom of the barrel. Not to mention, he is about the most arrogant person I have met outside of that pig known as my cousin.

Before getting sorted, I met Blaise Zabini and Daphne Greengrass. Neither one seemed to mind that I am a Knight. I guess that isn't too surprising, since you did say that both the Zabini and Greengrass families weren't for or against the Ministry. They're both Slytherins

now, so I'm not sure how this will work out. I hope they will see past petty house rivalries.

Neville got sorted into Gryffindor with me. I haven't spoken to him, and he hasn't spoken to me. My other dorm mates, outside of Neville and Ronald, are Seamus Finnigan and Dean Thomas. I haven't really talked to either of them, but they both seem alright.

There is this muggleborn girl named Hermione Granger. During the feast, she asked about the siege we led on the Ministry. I answered that yes we did lead a siege and then told her not to ask me anymore questions. I let it go after that, but what should I do in the future? She did not look like she really wanted to give it a rest. I wouldn't be surprised, if she questioned me further about it later on.

I realize she probably isn't used to the etiquette rules that govern our world, and she seems to be just curious, but still. I can't believe she outright asked me that and while we were having a proper meal no less. It is not really any of her business as to what our ancestors have and have not done, nor is it anyone else's. Clearly, her muggle parents didn't teach her not to go prying into people's private business.

She is in my year and in my house. I can't necessarily avoid her forever. Not to mention, with her being muggleborn, people will judge how I act towards her. Any advice would be helpful.

The last thing you should know, and the most interesting of all, is that Headmaster Dumbledore announced a ban on the west side of the third floor corridor. From the older students' reactions, this doesn't seem to be a normal thing. Also, Headmaster Dumbledore mentioned pain of death for trespassers. He seemed completely serious about it.

Could you tell Carter and Nick that I love and miss them, and could you share with them what house I got into? I'll write again soon. I promise letters to all of you next time.

Dad, I love you, and I miss you.

Your son,

Blake

Blake looked over the letter and was satisfied that he had said everything that needed to be said. He blew on it a bit to dry the ink, before rolling it up. He tucked it away in his bag, along with his quill. In the time it took to write the letter, several people had come down to eat, but there were still many empty spots at all the tables. Most of the Gryffindors had given him space, but several kept glancing down at him. Blake chose to act like he didn't notice their behavior and dipped himself a bit of breakfast. He was halfway through his porridge, when owls fluttered into the Great Hall. He looked up and spotted Elden flying towards him. The spotted owl landed gracefully on the table and held out his leg. With a grin, Blake detached the letter from his father.

"I have a letter for Dad, if you'll just wait a minute." Blake said quietly and petted the owl's head. Elden hooted in affirmation. Blake dug into his bag and took out the letter he wrote earlier. He held it out, and Elden clipped it in his mouth. Blake petted Elden's feathers a few more times, before the owl took flight once again. Blake turned his attention to the letter from his father and eagerly opened it. He really wanted to know what had happened with the Ministry.

Dear Blake,

I'm missing you already, my son. You have no clue how quiet the house is without you here. I have gotten so used to having you around, chatting my ear off, that I forgot how lonely this place can be. I think I may invite Nick and Carter over more often, in order to stave off the silence.

I hope that your train ride went well, and that you are pleased with the house you got sorted into. Whatever your house, know that I am proud of you. I know you're going to do well. You have always managed to excel in all that I have asked of you. I am sure that Hogwarts will be no different. I look forward to reading all about it.

I suppose you are wondering how things turned out with the Ministry. Apparently, the goblins are in an uproar over the break in, and with who I am, the Ministry felt it best to cut out the middle man. I was called before a panel of Wizengamot members and a representative from the goblins. I let them question me a bit. The accusations they made were really quite ridiculous, though I gained a lot of information from it. After an hour, I finally got them to check with the

Magical Authorities of Kenya. Our arrival time was easily verified, and they had to let me go. However, I'm not certain everyone believed the documentation of our arrival was authentic. Regardless, they cannot do anything about it, as they have no just cause to further build a case against me. I am pretty confident that the goblins have dismissed me of any suspicion, as Representative Axelbak shook my hand and apologized at the end.

Blake, this is very serious. Whoever did break into Gringotts, is very powerful and very well versed in dark magic. They managed to break all of the Goblin's enchantments that were between them and the vault they were after. I have a certain suspicion, but nothing concrete. I need to check some things first. Son, be very cautious. Do not let your guard down and don't hesitate to call me with your Heir's Ring, if you ever find yourself in danger. I'm not sure what is going on yet. I don't expect trouble at Hogwarts, at least not with Albus Dumbledore there. However, nothing can be certain. Especially, if my suspicions are correct. I promise that you will be informed, when I know more.

I love you, Blake, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Dad

Blake read over the last few paragraphs again. Whatever was going on, it wasn't good. His father was not fond of giving him information. He didn't want him to worry over things that he didn't need to be worrying about. However, this letter gave him all kinds of information and had a promise of more. Blake rolled up the letter and put it in his book-bag.

Blake was almost finished with his breakfast, when Professor McGonagall came around and handed out their course schedules. He thanked her politely, when she gave him his. He scanned over it quickly. He would have Herbology with the Hufflepuffs, an hour and a half break, and then Transfigurations with the Ravenclaws. After lunch he would have a short break and then History of Magic with the Hufflepuffs. He would be done for the day by 3:00. He put the schedule in his bag and returned to eating his breakfast. It was only a few minutes later, when he was finishing off his last slice of apple.

Even though the bell to go to class wouldn't sound for another five minutes, Blake decided to start making his way down to Herbology.

On his way out of the Great Hall, he met his dorm mates running down the marble staircase. They quickly rushed past him to get something to eat, before classes started. Blake just shook his head and continued out the castle doors. He smiled, as the sun warmed his face on his way to the greenhouses.

Herbology ended up passing by at a dull pace. Professor Sprout, a short little witch and the Head of Hufflepuff, laid out at least 50 different rules regarding conduct and behavior within the greenhouses. She then assigned them to read up on Star Grass. When the bell sounded at the end of class, Blake eagerly left Greenhouse One and headed to the court yard for break.

Blake spent almost all of his break period basking in the late summer sun, while he searched through The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) for a simple silencing ward. As he expected, he had no luck. He knew that it was a long shot, but at the moment, the book was the only resource that was accessible to him. Though, during his search, he did find several other interesting spells that had captured and held his attention. Two of which, that he thought would be very useful, were Alohomora and Incendio. Knowing how to get through locked doors was a definite plus, and the fire conjuring spell would allow him to burn letters from his father without having to wait to find a lit fireplace.

It wasn't until the break period was almost over, that someone approached him and disturbed him out of his reading.

"One would think you belong in Ravenclaw, spending your break with your nose stuck in a book." A girl commented, as she sat down on the stone recess next to him.

Blake looked over to see that it was Daphne. "Apparently, I am a bit too wild for that house."

"Is that so?" She asked with a bit of skepticism, as her eyes studied him closely.

"The Hat has never been wrong." Blake said with a grin, before giving her a searching look. "Though, one would wonder why you, Miss Slytherin, are talking to a Gryffindor."

"It's not exactly against the rules, is it?" She asked him tentatively, and for a second, doubt crossed her face.

"Not against any rule that has been written." Blake quipped with a reassuring smile. "Besides, rules are more like...guidelines."

"Free to be bent to suit one's purpose." Daphne acknowledged.

"Or, to be disregarded all together." Blake agreed.

"I suppose that would be why you aren't in Ravenclaw." Daphne observed with a smirk on her delicate features. "They're sticklers for rules, or so I've been told."

"They just need to be taught to lighten up." Blake said with a wily grin, as he thought of all the good times he had with Carter.

"What were you reading about that was so interesting?" Daphne asked curiously.

"I was hoping to find a silencing ward." Blake said and looked down at the book in his lap. "I suppose that I'll have to go to the library, when classes are over with for the day."

"Those are supposed to be complicated." Daphne commented with a serious undertone to her voice.

"I know," Blake said with a nonchalant shrug, "but my dorm mates, or maybe just one of them, snore really loud. I could barely sleep last night."

"It sucks to be you." Daphne said unsympathetically.

"Not once I find a good silencing ward." Blake told her with determination lacing his voice

"You know, you could just ask one of the Professors." Daphne pointed out, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Blake glanced away from her with uncertainty. He hadn't even thought of asking for help from one of the professors. However, now that it was brought up, he realized he wasn't sure, if they would be

willing to spend their free time to help him. A lot of them hadn't even wanted him to attend Hogwarts.

"Oh." Daphne said in sudden understanding.

"Yeah – oh." Blake said dryly. "I don't think anyone is about to do me any favors."

"You could ask." Daphne suggested timidly. "It would be a whole lot better than wasting your time trying to learn it yourself."

"I guess." Blake agreed with indifference, just as the bell sounded for the end of break.

"Talk to you later." Daphne said, and got up. She flashed him a small smile, before turning away from him and heading back inside.

Blake put his book away in his bag and slung it over his shoulder. He sighed, as he began to slowly make his way to Transfigurations. He took his time in leaving the courtyard. He wanted to soak up as much sun as he could, as this late in the year the sun was a fickle thing. When he finally made it to his transfigurations class, he was left with two seating options. He could either sit with Hermione Granger or with a dark skinned Ravenclaw boy. If he remembered right, the boy's name was Stephen Cornfoot. Not wanting to subject himself to the bushy haired witch, he sat down next to the Ravenclaw. The boy looked him up and down with dark brown eyes, before he turned his attention to the front of the room, where Professor McGonagall was taking roll.

The class started out with a very impressive display from Professor McGonagall. She turned her desk into a pig and then back again. She did it in a way that made it seem like it was the simplest thing in the world. Several people got extremely excited about the prospect of what they would be doing in the class. However, they were soon let down, when she started into a lecture on the magical theory of Transfigurations. Blake knew that they weren't going to be turning desks into pigs any time soon. He knew from doing the animagus transformation that they would have to work up to doing such things. His suspicions were confirmed, when the professor eventually passed out matches for them to turn into needles.

Blake set his match out in front of him on the desk and focused his full concentration on it. He mentally pictured the match turning into a needle, before he pushed his magic into his wand and performed the required spell. His eyes widened a bit, as one of the match ends thinned out into a pointy tip and its square edges became rounded. If it weren't for it still being made of wood, it would have been considered a perfect needle.

"Huh." Blake said as he picked it up and studied it. He set it back on the desk and attempted the reversal spell. In seconds, he had a plain match sitting in front of him. He did the same process as before. Only this time, he focused on wanting the match to be a metal needle. He grinned to himself, as he watched the match become a needle once again. It wasn't completely made of metal, but it was better than what he achieved the last time he tried.

"Excellent, Mr. Knight." Professor McGonagall said over his shoulder. "Now, go ahead and do the reversal spell and then try it again. Really concentrate on it being made of metal this time."

Blake did as instructed, and the match was once again sitting on his desk. He focused on the image of the match becoming a needle, while focusing on the needle actually being made of pure metal. This time, when he preformed the spell, there was a perfect metal needle on his desk.

"Five points to Gryffindor, Mr. Knight." Professor McGonagall rewarded in a satisfied tone, before moving on.

Blake turned and watched her walk away, as she went to check on Neville's and Dean's progress. He knew from both Carter and Percy that she was a fair person, but he also knew that she was one of the professors, who had questioned whether it was wise for a Knight to attend Hogwarts. He was surprised that she had acted so unbiased towards him.

"How'd you do that so quickly?" Stephen asked from beside him.

"You have to really think that your match is going to turn into a metal needle." Blake said simply. "It is more than just wanting it. You have to believe it."

Blake practiced turning his match into a needle a few more times. When the bell finally sounded for lunch, several people had made a lot of progress. However, the only other person to achieve the full transfiguration was Hermione Granger.

As everyone rushed out to go to lunch, Blake waited behind. He had come to a decision, while practicing changing his match into a needle and then back again. He knew that Daphne was right. That he should just ask one of the professors for help, instead of wasting his time trying to learn how to perform a silencing ward all by himself. Professor McGonagall had shown that she was capable of treating him like any other student, despite her personal views. If he were to ask a professor for help, then she would most likely be his best option. Plus, she was his Head of House.

Blake slowly walked up to the large mahogany desk that Professor McGonagall was sitting behind, at the head of the classroom. He stopped just short of it.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Knight?" Professor McGonagall asked and looked up at him questioningly.

Blake hesitated a moment, before resolving himself. He took the last step up to the desk with a bit more confidence than before. "Professor McGonagall, I know that you are very busy, especially with it being the first day back. I also realize that I am not someone, who many here wish to instruct outside of what is required of them, but I was hoping that you would be willing to teach me how to correctly cast a silencing ward."

She regarded him closely and folded her arms on the desk. "Why would do you, a first year, need to know such a thing?"

"To be honest, ma'am, my dorm mates snore very loudly, and I am used to having silence, when I sleep." Blake said seriously.

"Did you sleep last night?" She inquired, as she studied his face more carefully than she had before. A slight frown crossed her face, and she pursed her lips.

"I slept some, but not much, ma'am." Blake admitted. He had to force himself not to fidget under her intense scrutiny. He kept his face impassive and returned her gaze.

"I will teach you." Professor McGonagall said decisively, after a moment of contemplation. "However, understand that this is a very complicated piece of magic for a first year to learn. I expect you to be in my office at 6:00 sharp."

"Thank you, Professor." Blake said gratefully.

"You best get to lunch, Mr. Knight." She said pointedly and inclined her head to the classroom door.

Blake nodded and quickly left to make his way down to the Great Hall. He ate his lunch much in the same manner that he had eaten his breakfast. Many Gryffindors gave him a wide berth, while they consumed their food peacefully, yet cautiously. It was like they were waiting for him to launch an attack of some sort. He opted to ignore them for now. Instead, he turned his attention to observing his fellow first years. He noted that Seamus, Dean, Ronald, and Neville seemed to be getting along famously. All the girls appeared to be getting along as well, excluding Hermione. She had her head buried in a book.

When the bell finally rang for the end of lunch, Blake left the Great Hall. He spent the thirty minute break before History of Magic, slowly making his way to the classroom. He took the time to fully take in the castle. It was definitely different than Knight Mansion. One of the main differences was that the stones of the castle were fairly light in color. Another was that the walls were lined with hundreds of portraits. However, the most glaringly apparent difference was that the castle was exactly that, a castle. Try as he might, he couldn't find one aspect of the castle that reminded him of Knight Mansion.

Blake's afternoon passed at a very dull pace. The full hour of History of Magic was filled with the never ending drone of Professor Binns. Blake didn't think it was possible for anyone to learn anything in that class. The ghost professor made the subject unbearably boring. The worst part was that Professor Binns didn't seem to be fully in touch with the mortal world. He barely paid them any attention. In fact, over half the class fell asleep and the ghost didn't even notice, let alone care. Blake just took notes the best he could, while forcing himself to stay awake. He was already exhausted, and Professor Binns seemed determined to lull him into sleep. He decided halfway through that he was going to have to do something different, if he

wanted to pass the class. There was no way that the notes he took so far were anywhere near being adequate.

Blake was grateful, when the bell rang for the end of class. With a few hours free before dinner, he decided that a nap was in order. His bad night of sleep had caught up to him quickly, as Professor Binns lectured on about the beginnings of magic in Britain. Blake, along with the rest of the first year Gryffindors, headed back to Gryffindor Tower. He was thankful when his dorm mates quickly dropped off their things, before excitedly leaving to go explore the castle. Soon after they left, he fell into a peaceful sleep.

Ten minutes before dinner started, Blake reluctantly woke up. After washing the sleep off his face, he made his way down to the Great Hall. Like with breakfast and lunch, he ate his meal on his own, while several different Gryffindors glanced down the table at him. Outwardly, Blake appeared to be unperturbed by it. Internally, their behavior grated on his nerves. However, there was no need for them to know that they were bugging him. It would only show them a vulnerable spot to pick at. His father always told him not to show weakness in the face of the unknown, as he wouldn't know if enemies were present, and showing weakness in front of the enemy would be to make himself an easy target. Therefore, he did his best not to let his housemates bother him.

At fifteen minutes to six, Blake finished his meal and headed off to find Professor McGonagall's office. Following what Percy told him the night before, he managed to find his Head of House's office with a few minutes to spare. He took a deep breath, before knocking on the door. He heard a muffled 'come in' from the other side of it. With a small amount of trepidation, he pushed the door open and stepped inside the sensibly decorated office. Professor McGonagall indicated for him to sit down on the straight back, wooden chair that sat in front of her large desk. He did as directed and looked up at her expectantly.

"This is a very complex piece of magic for someone who is inexperienced." She began in a lecturing tone. "For what you are in need of, a charm will not work. Though, you clearly understand that, as you requested to learn a ward."

Blake nodded. He didn't know much about wards, but he did recognize that there was a difference between a silencing ward and

a silencing charm. He knew that charms affected an object, while wards affected an area. He wanted to create a bubble of silence around his bed, which meant he needed a ward.

"Now, there are no simple wards. All wards have complex wand movements and their incantations are longer than most other spells. Both, the wand movements and the incantation, need to be exact, otherwise the ward will easily fail. On top of that, great concentration is needed when setting the ward. It is your mind that will push the magic of the ward to set around a certain area. That will be the hardest part for you to learn." Professor McGonagall lectured seriously. "Understand, what I am about to attempt to teach you is sixth year material, so don't expect this to come easily. It will take some time for you to master it. I will show you the simplest silencing ward that exists. Know that it is easily brought down with a simple Finite. Though, more difficult silencing wards can become almost unbreakable. The incantation for the one you will be learning is Silentium Extrarius Sonitus."

"Silence external noise." Blake said in understanding.

"Correct." Professor McGonagall said with a bit of surprise. "We'll work on your pronunciation first. So, repeat after me, Silentium Extrarius Sonitus."

"Silentium Extrarius Sonitus." Blake couldn't hold back his grin, as he pronounced the incantation perfectly. At Professor McGonagall's stunned look, he explained. "I have taken over three years of Latin language lessons, Professor. I'm very fluent in it."

"I suppose we should work on the wand movements then." She said and withdrew her wand.

For the next twenty minutes, Professor McGonagall guided Blake through the wand movements. She made sure that he was able to perform them perfectly, before she moved on to discuss the theory behind the ward. When it finally came time for Blake to try and cast the ward, she directed him to set the ward to encompass the immediate area around him.

Blake found that he was actually very impressed with the Transfigurations' professor. She instructed him with indifference, which allowed him to focus on the material she was trying to teach

him. The theory of the ward didn't sound too difficult. After all, he had been controlling his magic with his thoughts for a few years now.

On his first attempt to erect the ward, he learned that there was one very big difference between setting a ward and manipulating his magic wandlessly. When he used wandless magic, he had to focus and direct his magic to do as he desired. However, when he attempted to set a ward, he not only needed to focus and direct his magic, but he also had to maintain the ward that was imbedded within the magic he was directing. He lost focus on the ward and it snapped, before he could even set it.

It took Blake several tries, but by the time it was starting to get close to curfew for the first and second years, he had managed to erect the ward. He grinned, as Professor McGonagall began speaking to him and he couldn't hear a word of what she was saying. He cast a Finite at the ward surrounding him.

"It worked." Blake declared with excitement.

"Well done, Mr. Knight." Professor McGonagall said a bit stunned. She hadn't really expected him to actually accomplish the ward in one lesson. If she was tutoring a sixth year, she wouldn't have been surprised. However, Blake Knight was only a first year, and today was his first introduction into using magic, as far as she knew. It usually took students four or five years, before they were familiar enough with wand movements, incantations, and their own magic, that they could even hope to achieve learning to set a ward within just an hour and a half's time. She observed the raven haired boy across from her. She knew that there was no way he could have preformed the ward so quickly, not if today was the first time he used magic. She had thought nothing of his success in her class earlier, but now she could see that he had to have had at least some prior magical training.

"Thank you, Professor McGonagall. I really appreciate you taking the time to instruct me this evening." Blake said genuinely, while doing his best not to fidget under her scrutinizing gaze.

"You're welcome." Professor McGonagall said curtly, as she pondered over the conclusion that she had just reached and what possible implications could be drawn from it. "You should probably

get back to Gryffindor Tower. First and second year curfew will be in effect soon."

"Yes, ma'am." Blake said in polite acknowledgement of her instructions, before he put away his wand and the notes that he had taken. He got up to leave, once he finished packing everything away in his bag. At the door he paused and turned back to her. "Goodnight, Professor."

"Goodnight." Professor McGonagall said in a distracted manner.

Blake quickly made his way back to Gryffindor Tower. He had to get the portraits to point him in the right directions a few times, but he eventually found his way. He gave the password to the Fat Lady and climbed through the portrait hole. There were several people spread out in the common room. Some were playing exploding snaps, others were just sitting around visiting with their friends, and a few were working on homework. He silently weaved his way over to the stairs that led up to the boys dormitories. After climbing all the way to the top, he reached the landing of the first year dorm.

Blake was surprised to see that Neville was already settled in bed with his Herbology textbook spread across his lap. He had seen Dean, Seamus, and Ronald playing an intense game of chess in the common room and just assumed that Neville was with them. The blond boy didn't even look up from his reading, when Blake entered. Blake decided to leave him be and went about getting ready for bed. After pulling on his pajamas, he got out his own Herbology text and climbed into his four-poster bed. He found the passage on Star Grass and began to read.

"Did you really get detention with McGonagall?" Neville asked quietly from across the room.

"No." Blake stated plainly, while silently fuming inside. He didn't need people thinking that he was already trying to cause trouble. "Where did you hear that?"

"Peeves saw you report to Professor McGonagall's office. He's told everyone that you got yourself detention." Neville explained. The question of why Blake needed to go to Professor McGonagall's office was left hanging in the air, but Neville didn't actually voice his curiosity. Both boys knew it wasn't any of his business.

Blake just returned his attention to his textbook with a scowl on his face. The whole school would be under the assumption that Blake Knight couldn't even behave for one whole day. It irked him, but there was nothing he could do about it now. Neville followed his example and went back to reading. The two read the assigned pages in silence. Neville finished up ten minutes later and actually laid down to go to sleep. Blake ended up going to bed a half hour later. With his silencing ward in place, he didn't hear their other three dorm mates finally turn in at 10:30.

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The next few days passed without incident for Blake. He got up, went to class, ate dinner, finished up his homework in the evening hours, and then went to bed. He did everything in his power to avoid Hermione Granger. He had quickly realized that the girl had an insane need to know everything about everything, which happened to include the famous history of the Knight family. The other Gryffindor girls in his year avoided him. Seamus, Dean, and Ronald did the same. Neville was civil to him. Blake was certain that the blond boy was a bit conflicted on the issue, as they both knew that technically they were supposed to stay away from each other. Blake was the Knight Heir, and Neville was the Boy-Who-Survived. They stood for two opposite things, in most people's opinions. The rest of the Gryffindors seemed to let him be. As long as he wasn't in their way, they were content to pretend he wasn't around.

The other houses were a bit of a different story. Susan Bones, the pretty red head that he had kept from falling the night of their arrival, agreed to let him be hers and Hannah Abbott's Herbology partner, while they worked with the Star Grass. He greatly appreciated it, as it saved him from having to partner off with Hermione. The bushy haired girl ended up joining Ernie Macmillan and Jessica Spinks, once everyone else had formed into groups of three.

Several of the Ravenclaws were more or less indifferent towards him. They seemed to respect his intelligence, and they would compete with him in class for house points. Stephen Cornfoot made their seating arrangements an unspoken agreement, by willingly sitting next to him again in their next Transfigurations class. Blake was one of the first to arrive, and Stephen could have chosen to sit at any of the other desks in the room. Instead, he sat down in the

chair next to Blake and struck up a conversation with him, when Blake asked what he thought of their previous lesson.

As for the Slytherins, Daphne told him that his company was far more desirable than the company of her housemates, and she took to hanging out with him during their free time. She was a little pureblood princess; that much was for sure. She held people to a certain standard, and she refused to lower herself below those standards. She expected to be treated with the respect entitled to her, and she was more than a bit spoiled. However, she wasn't cruel or mean hearted, which was something that she claimed a lot of her housemates were.

On Tuesday afternoon, Blaise ended up joining them out by the lake. He had made it a point to join them at every opportunity since. At first, Daphne turned her nose up at him, but eventually she deemed him worthy of being in her presence. Blake found it entertaining, while Blaise shot the blond girl a glare.

When Blake jokingly asked the two Slytherins why they even wanted to hang out with a Gryffindor, he learned that the first year Slytherins were expected to either worship Draco Malfoy like Gregory Goyle, Vincent Crabbe, Millicent Bulstrode, and Pansy Parkinson, or remain as far in the background as possible like Theodore Nott, Allen Runcorn, Tracey Davis, and Lillian Moon. Daphne claimed she would do neither of those things and that she was above such actions. Blaise believe that it was disgraceful to snivel in anyway, whether it was sucking up or hiding in the corner. He declared that for a Gryffindor, Blake wasn't all that bad, and that he was far better company than Malfoy.

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"They're absolutely massive, and with their tusks...I wouldn't want to be around one, when it gets mad." Blake said animatedly with a shake of his head. It was Thursday afternoon, and he was sitting out near the lake with Daphne and Blaise.

"You're lying. I've never heard of such a thing." Blaise said skeptically.

"I'm not. I'll ask my father to send some pictures of the trip." Blake said with an amused grin and leaned back against the tree that they

were sitting under. "Though, it is the jungle cats that you really have to watch out for. They're great predators and are super fast. Then there are the snakes. They're downright poisonous."

"What else did you do in Kenya, besides track down a bunch of non-magical killer beasts?" Daphne asked with her eyes closed and her face up turned to the late afternoon sun.

Blake was about to answer, when he notice Percy approaching them out of the corner of his eye. The red head stopped just short of them.

"Good afternoon, Percy." Blake greeted with a welcoming grin.

"Good afternoon, Blake." Percy said with a bit of nervousness. "I was hoping that I could have a word with you?"

Blake looked to Daphne and Blaise. Both were giving Percy an unimpressed once over. Percy, for his part, paid them little mind.

"Of course." Blake agreed politely and gave him an expectant look.

"In private." Percy added and shifted unsurely.

Blake looked to his companions. "Would you mind?"

Daphne and Blaise silently got up and collected their things, before they headed back to the castle. On their way past, Blaise sneered at Percy, while Daphne shot him a superior look. Blake rolled his eyes at their behavior and indicated for Percy to sit down. Percy seated himself in the grass a few feet away from Blake.

"I assume you want something." Blake said with a question look, when Percy remained silent.

"You said Sunday night that I should make it a point to find out my family history." Percy began with false confidence. "You also alluded to the Weasley family having access to a chair on the Wizengamot."

"Wrong." Blake said flatly. He watched Percy closely, as the red head tried to master his disappointment. "At the moment, you have access to nothing."

"But, we could have access?" Percy asked with a hopeful look.

"No." Blake said simply. "You could have access to a chair on the Wizengamot."

"I'm afraid I don't follow." Percy said with confusion.

Blake smirked. "Take this how you want to, but as far as I see it, you are the only one in your family who could even hope to gain access to what is rightfully yours by blood."

"You don't know my family." Percy protested.

"I know enough." Blake shrugged. "I know what I've read. I know what I see. Anyone, who lets their child come into public with dirt smudged on their nose, can't possibly hope to survive in pureblood society. Not to mention, Ronald's lack of manners all around. You told me yourself that Fred and George have no ambition to do anything with their lives."

"I'll have you know that I have two older brothers, and both have respectable careers." Percy said hotly.

"Do you really?" Blake asked with interest.

"Yes, Bill is my eldest brother, and he works as a curse breaker in Egypt for Gringotts. Charlie just graduated the year before last, and he is working with dragons in Romania." Percy said proudly.

Blake grinned. Charlie definitely had a cool job. Though, Bill's sounded interesting as well. "So, do you think they are better suited than you to take on the role of Lord Weasley?"

Percy looked at him stunned. "Lord?"

"Surely you realized that by gaining your chair on the Wizengamot, you would also gain back the honored title of Lord Weasley?" Blake asked seriously. "You are of an old bloodline. The chair and the title, along with the old Weasley vault, is your birthright."

"A vault?" Percy whispered in astonishment.

"Like I said, you really need to look into your family history." Blake told him with an amused grin, before turning serious once again.

"Though, you never did answer my question. Are either Bill or Charlie better suited than you?"

Percy shook his head. "They don't have any interest in gaining the family a more respectable position."

"Then it is as I said, you are the only one with any hope of actually claiming your family chair on the Wizengamot." Blake proclaimed, as if it were the simplest concept in the world.

"What would I have to do?" Percy questioned eagerly.

"I don't have that information." Blake admitted honestly.

"Then who does?" Percy asked wonderingly. "I don't think my father knows anything about it. He doesn't even know much about our family history. I wrote him Sunday. The letter I got this morning told me nothing, just that I shouldn't worry about it."

"Well, the goblins are in charge of keeping track of inheritance. They would most likely have the information on what you need to do in order to gain your chair on the Wizengamot." Blake informed, before a contemplative look crossed his face. "Your old family vault would have a lot of information concerning your family history. Once again, you would have to discuss that with the goblins. Though, when you do, be wary of them. Without hesitation, they will put the nail in the coffin of an ignorant wizard, who is seeking to do business with them. They're greedy like that."

"How do you know all of this?" Percy asked perplexed. He would bet that most of the students at Hogwarts didn't have a clue about half of what Blake was speaking of.

Blake held up his left hand, and showed his Heir's Ring to Percy. "I am the bonded heir to the Noble and Most Ancient House of Knight. It is my duty to know all about my family's history, the way inheritance is passed down, and the political standing my family holds. It is also important that I know who is who and what is what in our society. My father doesn't believe that there is an age restriction on propriety and nobility. Childhood ignorance is never an excuse, not if the child is old enough to grasp the concepts that govern our society."

Percy's gaze wandered over the ring. "You said bonded heir, is that different than a regular heir?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm not permitted to give you any further information." Blake denied with a shake of his head.

"Permitted?" Percy asked, and he gave Blake an odd look.

"If I help you any further, then I would be helping you towards gaining your Lordship. That in turn, would demand an alliance of our houses, or if you refuse, it could result in a blood feud between our families." Blake said seriously. He pinned Percy with a penetrating gaze to make sure he understood the situation fully. "What information I have given already, is close to over stepping my bounds. I don't have the authority to make the call on this, so I cannot tell you anything else. If my father grants me permission, then I will be able to help you. That is, if you are willing to accept my help."

"Why are you so interested in helping me?" Percy asked wearily.

"You're of a Noble and Ancient Bloodline." Blake said, as if it explained everything. Percy gave him a questioning look, but Blake offered nothing more. After a moment of silence, Blake got up. "We should head in. Dinner will be starting any minute."

Blake walked off towards the castle, before Percy even had a chance to stand up. The prefect caught up with him a moment later. Blake ignored the assessing glances Percy threw his direction, as they walked back to the castle. When they reached the Gryffindor table, Blake took a seat in what had quickly become his traditional spot. His back was to the wall, and he could clearly see the Head Table, most of the student population, and the Great Hall doors. To his surprise, Percy sat down across from him, instead of going to join those in his year. Blake filled his plate with a balanced meal and got himself a glass of ice water. When he looked across from him, he saw Percy studying his plate. The plate in front of the red head remained empty.

"Problem?" Blake questioned pointedly.

"I was just curious." Percy said quietly.

"Oh?" Blake said, and he quirked a questioning eyebrow at him.

"You sit here for every meal. Every meal, you select foods that no one our age would volunteer to eat. In fact, half of the things you eat haven't been offered before this year." Percy explained, while looking at Blake intently. "You have yet to touch dessert. Is there a reason you eat as you do?"

Blake carefully observed Percy. It was clear that Percy had been paying closer attention to him than he had thought. It was four full days since they first spoke. That would be plenty of time for an academic mind, such as Percy's, to devour most of the information the Hogwarts Library had to offer on the Knight family. Percy had no doubt attempted to find his own families history, so for him to look into the Knights as well, wasn't exactly that unexpected. Blake knew that his ancestors were noted for being well informed on the deepest levels of magic. Various major medical advancements, as well as several revolutionary theories on magic use and development, were made by members of the Knight family. Blake knew that Percy's curiosity wasn't necessarily for the food he ate, but rather what magical advantage he might get from it.

"My father wishes me to be healthy, and a balanced diet makes remaining so easier to manage. This weekend is the end of my reprieve, so I will once again take up my traditions physical training as well. Combined together, they keep me strong and in top condition." Blake explained, before taking a bite of spinach. He had long passed the stage of grimacing at his food. He had actually come to enjoy the taste of the foods he once despised.

Percy looked like he had further questions. However, he momentarily ceased from asking them, choosing instead to dip up a meal that reflected Blake's. After sitting back down and taking a few bites, he spoke in an offhanded, yet nervous manner. "Are you unwell, Blake?"

Blake gave Percy a puzzled look. "I am far from being unwell. My father ensures that I remain well. Though, it is up to me now to ensure it, which I will. He would not have me sick."

It was Percy's turn to be confused. "You said you do physical training and eat a balance diet to remain strong and in good condition. If you are not unwell, then what did you mean by that? I

am in good condition. Yet, I do not do physical training, nor do I not eat sweets."

A genuine smile lit Blake's face. His midnight blue eyes sparkle with mirth, as he surveyed the red head across from him. "We clearly have two different definitions of good condition, Young Percy." Percy blinked at the title Blake used with his name. It only made Blake's grin widen. "Sounds good, doesn't it?"

"It does. Though, I am afraid that without help, I won't ever achieve it." Percy said with a bit of despair and forked absentmindedly at his food. "If your father declines you permission to help me, would there be no hope to change his mind?"

"My father's word is law." Blake said very seriously. "I do not question his judgment without just cause. It is not my place to doubt him on matters, in which, he has more knowledge of the situation than I do. The consequences for thinking it is, I am not fond of. Arrogance and blatant ignorance are unacceptable from a Knight."

Percy looked at him inquisitively and with a bit of surprise. Blake could see that Percy was very intrigued by the conversation, but at the same time he was unwilling to ask the questions plaguing his mind. It was plain to see that Percy didn't want to risk losing the help he had offered him.

"You do realize that I am not the only one who can help you, right?" Blake asked bluntly. "There are other families that you could ask for assistance."

"I looked up my family history in the library. Surprisingly, there are few books on wizarding heritage, when concerning bloodlines." Percy said with disappointment. "I learned enough to know that you weren't lying to me. My great by two times grandfather proved to my great by three times grandfather that he was unfit to take up the family legacy, and he ended up losing it altogether in the end. Since that time, my family has followed the ideologies of my great by two times grandfather, Wilfred Weasley. According to what I have read, there has been no attempt on my family's part to reclaim our birthright. I can now see why so many purebloods hold us in low opinion. We have chosen peasant life over the life of nobility."

"I had always thought that our family money dwindled away. I always just assumed that we lost our title and our seat on the Wizengamot centuries back." Percy said, while looking at Blake miserably. "My father struggles to make enough money in order to put food on the table and pay our tuition to attend Hogwarts. My mother cooks and cleans day in and day out. She does her best, but sometimes things get stretched too thin. My brothers and sister are simple minded and often ungrateful. They whine about not having what the Malfoy's or the Diggory's have. Yet, they have done nothing to help the family gain a higher standing. Ron is the worst, but Fred and George aren't far behind.

"I can't do this on my own. I know that much." Percy said firmly. "I don't have the knowledge, nor do I have access to the knowledge. In my search of the Library, I found two books on generic pureblood customs. Both were written from a muggleborns perspective and entirely useless. I have gathered that pureblood customs are passed down orally, or any book written about them is kept within the family.

"Blake, I am not an idiot. I realized very few would desire to connect themselves to the Weasley family in a political way. There are very few who would be willing to help me. My family has fallen from grace in accordance to pureblood society. One book said that we are like a leaf floating on the winds, that we have nothing to ground us. We have lost our traditions that connected us to the Wizarding World. Yet, we have little experience with the Muggle World. We have no understanding of either world, which leaves us with nothing to fall back on. It is truly a disgrace! No one would want to even touch the mess that has been created of my family. I don't understand why you would, why your father would, but you may be my only hope."

"I am not the person you need to sway." Blake dismissed with a sigh. He set down his fork, as he looked across the table at Percy. "I realized your situation, but I can do nothing for you, not without my father's permission. He should send me his answer very soon. If he declines, I would suggest you write him a letter of appeal. For now, your words are, and shall remain, meaningless to me. I am sorry."

Percy looked glumly down at his dinner plate. Silence fell between him and Blake, as they continued to eat their meal.

"So, how was your week then?" Percy asked after some time had passed.

Blake couldn't hold back the sarcastic snort that formed in his throat. He looked around the Great Hall pointedly. It was the same as it had been all week: furtive glance, blatant dismissal, outright glares. The Gryffindors, as always, avoided sitting near him. Though, several people were now looking at Percy scandalously. "My week has been just lovely. I love being gawked at. Nothing makes my day more, than when someone takes one look at me and quickly turns in the opposite direction."

Percy's eyebrows shot up at the heavy sarcasm that laced each word that Blake spoke. "You do realize that you are not helping yourself by hanging out with Slytherins, don't you?"

"House rivalries matter little to me. I will talk to who I please." Blake said heatedly.

Percy decided to back off the subject, as it didn't seem to be one that was agreeable with Blake. Instead, he switched the topic of conversation to academics. Blake told him what he thought of his classes. He wasn't too pleased with Professor Binns or Professor Quirrell, but of the other subjects that he had attended so far, he was fairly satisfied. Professor Binns irritated him. He brought no life to the subject he taught. Then again, the man was not a man, but a ghost, so bring life to anything might be rather difficult. Professor Quirrell, in Blake's opinion, was nothing more than a stuttering fool. He was certain that the man couldn't curse his way out of a cardboard box. Not to mention the turban he wore smelled ghastly. Percy had frowned at Blake's assessment of the two professors, but did not voice his displeasure of Blake's forwardness concerning them.

Blake's opinions of Professor Sprout, Professor McGonagall, Professor Flitwick, and Professor Sinistra were a vast improvement. He found Professor Sprout very knowledgeable. He could plainly see that Professor McGonagall was widely capable in the art of Transfigurations. Professor Flitwick was not only well versed in his knowledge of Charms, but he also put a fun twist on things. The little man clearly had some goblin's blood in him. However, he held himself in a way that made it seem of little importance. Blake had found his class the most enjoyable. As for Professor Sinistra, he wasn't quite sure what to think. She knew her subject well and had no doubt spent years observing the night sky. She was a person

who didn't appreciate non-sense, but she was nowhere near as strict as Professor McGonagall. She snapped at them to get their telescopes out, yet waited patiently for them to follow her every instruction after that point.

Blake and Percy ended up talking until they were two of the last few students left in the Great Hall. Percy lightened up a bit and told him what he thought about the professors in his first year. Blake found it quite comical, as Percy's brother, Charlie, had set him up to think that if he even looked at Professor Snape wrong, then the man would poison him. Blake hadn't experience potions class yet. He was actually quite apprehensive about it. He knew he was knowledgeable enough at potions to avoid disaster, but Professor Snape sounded downright vicious to those who manage to get on his bad side. However, after listening to some of Percy's stories about the class, he was less wearisome. He decided that as long as he remained out of Professor Snape's way, he should survive easily enough.

Finally, they left the Great Hall and headed up to Gryffindor Tower. Blake went straight to his dorm, when they got back. As had become tradition, Neville sat on his bed with books out in front of him. He sighed in relief at seeing Blake. Blake went over to his bed, where he quickly discarded his out robes, before going over to Neville's bed. He sat down on the end of it and took the piece of parchment that Neville offered him.

"I take you need help." Blake said simply. Neville nodded in response. Blake looked over the two inches of progress that Neville had made on the Charms essay Professor Flitwick had set them that morning. Seeing that Neville was overall very confused on the concept behind charms work, he launched into an explanation that simplified what Professor Flitwick had told them in class. "It isn't so much about needing or wanting something to happen. It is willing something to happen. It is commanding your magic to bring an object to you or telling it to make an object appear blue. You have to make it happen. Wanting or needing the object to float in the air is part of it, but it is your force of thought that will make the spell actually work."

"Like in Transfigurations, I need to believe it?" Neville asked, still confused.

"No." Blake said shaking his head. "Transfigurations is about focusing on one thing and believing that it is something completely different. However, for Charms it is more about mental force in a visual sense. You see in your mind that the feather rises off the table a few inches. While you could believe it all you want, there is something more to it. You need to actually command the feather to do as you wish. Focus is the true key. It's kind of like an invisible arm reaches out and physically picks up the feather. In this case, the invisible arm is your magic. The action is controlled by not only the spell's command, but also by your mind. If you don't have complete focus, the feather might not rise more than a few fractions of an inch off the table, or it could end up shooting up to the ceiling. The spell commands that it rises off the table, but it is you who controls what happens after that. Charms is more about connecting to our magic, than any other subject we have."

"I think I understand it a bit better now." Neville said and got out a new parchment, so he could restart his essay. "Thanks, Blake."

Blake nodded and went over to his own bed once again. He took out his homework and got to work on it. He knew if Neville needed more help he would ask. They had been trading help on homework for the last few days. Blake wasn't sure what Neville wanted from him, but for now, they were using each other, and both of them knew it. Blake had been warned off from getting close to Neville. Dumbledore had a firm hold on the blond boy, which made befriending him an unnecessary risk. Besides his father's warning, Blake could tell that Neville knew that he wasn't supposed to really be talking to him either.

Around 9:00, Blake finally finished all his work. He had completed his own Charms essay, wrote out a chapter summary for Defense Against the Dark Arts, and because Professor Binns had bored him to unconsciousness in class once again, he made reliable notes from his History of Magic text. With a yawn, he set the silencing ward around his bed, before falling right to sleep.

Alright, took a bit to get this out, but life recently threw me for a spin...so yeah. I hope you found it entertaining. This chapter is a set up for several other things. Let me know what you think, because I always love to hear your opinions. So...good, bad, or whatever, let me know.

Thank you all for your support, but special thanks to the following for their wonderfully helpful reviews:

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Letters and Potions

Blake woke the next morning to the sound of his alarm. He gave a quiet groan and rolled out of bed with no small amount of reluctance. Today would be his first Potion's class, which meant that today would be his first class with Professor Snape. Nervous apprehension settled in his stomach, as he trudged his way to the bathroom to get ready. After a quick shower and getting dressed in his school robes, Blake packed his book-bag and head down to the Great Hall.

Like every morning that had passed so far, the Ravenclaw table was the only one even close to being halfway occupied at such an early hour. Blake settled himself down in his usual spot at the Gryffindor table and dipped up a bowl of porridge. As he ate, the hall progressively filled. He was just finishing off an apple, when the mail owls flooded in with letters and care packages for various students. Blake looked up to see Elden flying towards him with a large, thick envelope. When the owl landed next to him, he relieved him of his burden, before letting him munch on his toast.

"How was your week?" He asked the spotted owl, as he petted its head. Elden nipped at his fingers. "Sorry, I don't have anything for you to take back. I'll write over the weekend."

Elden gave him an indignant hoot and a sharp nip, before spreading his wings and flying off.

Blake shook his head amusedly at the ill tempered owl, while opening the envelope. Inside, he found two parchment packets and three letters: one from Nick, one from Carter, and one from his father. He pulled out Nick's letter first.

Little Knight,

Congratulations on your sorting. I had a feeling you would be a Gryffindor (no matter what Carter kept saying). You should have seen the look on your father's face, when he told me what house you were in. He couldn't stop smiling. Though, you should know that not only are we (your father, Carter, and I) proud of you, but those who have long passed would be very proud of you as well.

On a more serious note, though I am sure your father has already warned you, be very careful, Blake. My team has been one of three Auror teams that have been investigating the breaking at Gringotts. Something is not right, and I must admit that it makes me nervous to have you so far away at this time. You should be safe at Hogwarts, but do not under any circumstance let your guard down.

I apologize for needing to cut this short, but I must go. I just wanted to tell you that I am proud you and can't wait to hear all about Hogwarts. I will write you again (when your father and the Ministry aren't constantly pestering me).

I love you, Blake, and miss you very much.

Your favorite Auror,

Nick

P.S. Do try to keep out of trouble and don't drive the professors completely nuts. I know I am wasting parchment in saying it, but someone needs to be a responsible adult around here.

A smile broke across Blake's face at reading the letter. It was perfectly Nick. He placed Nick's letter back into the envelope and withdrew the one from Carter.

Blake, my favorite kid brother,

Blake rolled his eyes at this. He was the only kid Carter actually knew, and he was most definitely the only one that Carter actually liked. Being his favorite was hardly a challenge.

How is Hogwarts so far? I hope you've manage to find your way around. It is a bit of a drag at first with constantly getting lost, but you should get the hang of it soon. I heard about your sorting, and I am shocked! I was so sure that smart brain of yours would send you straight into Ravenclaw. Though, when I think about it, Gryffindor should suit you just fine. You've always been a bit on the wild side.

Speaking of living on the wild side, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING PLAYING WITH VERY LARGE PANTHERS? Better yet, what was your father thinking, when he let you? Don't even deny it! I saw the pictures. Your just lucky Nick didn't recognize your form, or you and

your father would have been skinned alive. You could have been killed. You do realize that, right? I sincerely hope that you managed to at least have a somewhat controlled environment, when you decide to prance up to a very large jungle cat and start playing with it. Knowing your father, it most likely was, but still. Are you trying to make me go grey before I turn thirty? I about had a heart attack, when I realized what I was looking at.

Enough of that, I'm not writing you to reprimand your insane behavior. I have better things to tell you, like the top secret information on the latest development within the Nimbus Company. In a meeting this last Monday, my bosses, and Mr. Nimbus himself, made a huge announcement. The competition in Canada with the Winchester, along with the competition in several other countries with various broom companies, has really put the pressure on our developers over the last few months. As a result, the beloved broom that you tried begging off of your father and blackmailing out of me, the Nimbus 2000, shall be outstripped this next summer by the Nimbus 2001. And when I say outstripped, I mean that the Nimbus 2000 will be considered a slug in comparison. Okay, so that might be slightly over exaggerated, but still, you get the point. Our developers succeeded in vastly improving the acceleration runes, while keeping the balance and breaking runes in check, creating the fastest broom yet. The specs will only improve, before it is released in July.

Therefore, as my duties of big brother and advisor clearly state, I must now tell you, Blake, to stop bugging your father for the Nimbus 2000 and start bugging him about getting you a Nimbus 2001. (Though, don't tell him I told you to do so...I'm not a fan of being glared at, especially by him.)

Now then, one last thing, I'm sure you will hear this from your father and Nick, but be very cautious, Blake. Things aren't looking too good. A very powerful and knowledgeable player has resurfaced. Try not to worry too much. I know your father and Nick will tell you that you are safe at Hogwarts, which you are, but we both know that it isn't yourself that you are going to be worrying about. Your father will be fine, Blake. He knows what he is doing. Nick and I will keep close to him. We'll make sure he doesn't do something stupid, I promise. We'll look out for each other as well. You have nothing to worry about, okay?

Know that I love and miss you, Blake.

Your big brother and self-proclaimed godfather,

Carter

Blake sighed after reading Carter's letter. The broom was definitely something he wanted to get his hands on, and the telling off for his activities in Kenya was familiar, but the warning at the end settled uneasiness in his stomach. Whatever was going on, it was very serious. He didn't miss the word 'resurfaced', which indicated that whoever broke into Gringotts had surfaced once before. With trepidation, he put Carter's letter back in the envelope and took out the one from his father.

My Son,

I am pleased to hear that you are happy with your sorting and that you are getting settled into Hogwarts. I hope that your week has been a good one and that you have been enjoying your classes. I haven't gotten any owls from the school, so I will take it as a good sigh that you haven't gotten around to causing too much trouble yet. I would have written back to you sooner, but my week has been fairly busy. Also, I was working on a few things concerning the letter you sent me.

First off, I want to say that I want you to stay away from Draco Malfoy. As I have told you, his father, Lucius, is an 'innocent' Death Eater. Lucius and I have not been on good terms. I highly doubt that whatever you said to Draco during your confrontation could make matters worse between us. Watch your back around Draco, Lucius is known for paying dirty, so he may be trying to use his son to get to you and in turn, get to me.

Secondly, concerning the Granger girl, I would like for you to be nice to her. Avoiding her like the plague will not help you. You just need to make it clear that you aren't going to answer her questions. I'm not saying you have to be friends, but you do need to at the least be civil towards her. She is your year mate and your housemate. You will have to deal with her for the next seven years of your magical education. A tentative relationship is better than one of animosity and avoidance. In the envelope I sent, there are two parchment packets. One is for this girl, perhaps a little information on pureblood

society will open her eyes to the world she has walked into. If she follows the advice given, she might be able to avoid angering other pureblood families with her ignorance. Give it to her as soon as you can.

As for Blaise Zabini, he comes from a neutral pureblood family. Young Zabini's father is deceased and his mother has since married five other men, all of whom have died mysteriously. She has built herself up a sizable wealth, though all Zabini assets have supposedly been saved for the son, Blaise. Young Zabini could be a very good friend to make. I advise you to try and get to know him better, regardless of house prejudice.

The same applies for Miss Greengrass. Lord Greengrass is a potioneer and a trader of valuable goods. I have already established a workable relationship with him and have known him for years. I actually met young Miss Daphne and Miss Astoria, her younger sister, several years ago, though she was probably too young to remember it. She, like you my son, knows what it is to hold family honor. The Greengrass line is noble and pure, nearly as old as the Blacks. I believe that if you do try to get to know her better, you will find that you come from the same principle.

Now then, Percy Weasley, I must admit that I was surprised at your request. I was unaware that there were any Weasleys of political value left. Arthur Weasley, Percy's father, works for the Ministry in the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office. Molly Weasley nee Prewett, Percy's mother, is known for being an overworked housewife. Then there are William and Charlie Weasley, Percy's elder brothers. William works for Gringotts as a curse-breaker, and Charlie works on the Romanian Dragon Reserve as a handler. Percy is the third child with four more coming after him. The three brothers you mentioned and a sister, Ginevra Weasley, who is due to start Hogwarts next year.

As for their allegiances, the Weasley family is allied to the Light, and as far as I know, they aren't directly allied to Dumbledore. Though, they do have a connection to him. Molly Weasley had two bothers. During the last war, Fabian and Gideon Prewett were members of Dumbledore's Order of the Phoenix (Don't spread that name around, it is supposed to be an unknown group.). They fought and died on the old man's orders.

After much deliberation and taking in several factors for consideration, I have decided that I will allow you to help Percy. However, there are rules. This cannot interfere with your school work. You are not to reveal more than is necessary. Moreover, any conflict that may occur with the other Weasleys, due to your association with Percy, is to be left to Percy to deal with. I want you to stay out of it. For whatever help you need, just ask and I will assist you any way I can.

The second parchment packet that I sent is for Percy. The packet contains all the information I could get on the Weasley family, as well as a signed letter to the goblins vouching for Percy. All he will need to do is sign it and setup a meeting with Gringotts' Inheritance Office. With the letter, he should be given tentative access to his vault in order to retrieve several documents that will help him with his goal. After that, things ought to be set in motion for him to begin to gain back his family's legacy.

On a different note, I thank you for the information you gave me concerning what Dumbledore announced at the welcoming feast. I have sent a letter to Dumbledore in regards to what you told me. Anything of concern that I find out, I will tell you about. Though, for now, I ask that you leave the situation alone and pursue it no further.

Lastly, you should know that over the next few weeks, I will not be reachable. Carter will be around, if you find yourself in need of anything, but Nick is coming with me. We will be going out of country, in search of confirmation of one of my theories concerning the Gringotts break in. I have already given you warning concerning the situation, but please be careful, Blake. This matter is a serious one. When I get back in country, I will tell you all that I deem you need to know.

Blake, you are everything to me and I love you very much. Keep yourself safe, son. I shall owl you the second I get back.

Missing you greatly,

Dad

Blake stoically replaced his father's letter into the envelope it came in. While he was happy that he'd be able to help Percy, the last few paragraphs of his father's letter completely dampened his mood. He

didn't like the idea of his father being gone for so long, especially when it was for something that was so dangerous. He could easily read between the lines. His father was going after the person who broke into Gringotts.

Pushing back the new sense of worry that had been aroused in him, Blake removed the two parchment packets from the envelope. One had Hermione Jean Granger written on the front of it, and the other had Percy Ignatius Weasley labeled across the top. He replaced Percy's and then put the envelope in his book-bag, before standing up and scanning over the faces of his housemates. He saw that the bushy haired witch he was looking for was sitting at the opposite end of the table with her potions text propped open in front of her. Blake picked up the parchment packet meant for her and headed towards her end of the table.

"Miss Hermione." Blake said, as he came up to her. She looked up at him in surprise, before her expression changed to caution. Several people around them fell quite, so they could listen in. It was well known by now that she had offended him the first night, and since then he had been avoiding her as much as he could. Blake held out the parchment packet that had her name on it. "My father wishes me to give you this. Whatever answers you may find within it are yours to have, but know that I will not supply you with anything further. We got off on the wrong foot, Miss Hermione, and must I apologize to you for my rudeness this week. I should not have ignored you the way I did. It was beyond the pale, and you have my word that I will not do so again. I do hope we can begin anew, Miss Hermione."

Hermione nodded curtly, before taking the parchment packet from Blake. She flipped it open and Blake saw an official letter from his father on the top. The Knight seal was burned in under his father's signature. Lavender Brown choked on her juice.

"You got an official letter from a Lord?" The blond girl asked with disbelief and jealousy.

"With this," Blake indicated the parchment packet that Hermione was holding, "you can no longer claim ignorance. I suggest you read and memorize it. Welcome to the Wizarding world, Miss Hermione."

With that, Blake turned and walked away from her. He caught Percy's eye on his way back up the table and nodded confirmation to what the red haired boy was silently asking. Percy scrambled to get up and followed him out of the Great Hall.

"Are you sure about what you told me yesterday, that you want my help?" Blake asked, as they crossed the entrance hall towards the dungeons.

"Yes." Percy affirmed.

Blake paused for a moment, before directing Percy into an alcove. He opened his book-bag and withdrew the envelope from his father. He removed the second parchment packet from it.

"My father said yes." Blake stated simply, while holding out the packet. "He set rules for me and no doubt even more for you. You should probably read this thoroughly and make sure you understand everything."

Percy took the packet and ran his hand over the front of it, as if it were the most precious thing in the world. "I don't know what to say."

"Just don't waste my father's and my time. Be serious about this." Blake said in a tone that his father often used with him, when he was stressing something important.

"I will be." Percy assured.

"Good. Now, I need to get to class." Blake said with a slight grimace.

"Just don't call Professor Snape's attention to you and you should be fine." Percy said with an encouraging smile.

Blake nodded, but he was in no way reassured. He quickly bid Percy goodbye, before heading down into the dungeons. He found the door to the potions classroom to still be locked, so he leaned against the wall to wait. Soon enough he was joined by a group of Slytherins. Blaise and Daphne immediately detached from the group and came to stand beside him. The Slytherins gave their two housemates mild glares, but after briefly glance at Blake as well, they said nothing about it. It didn't take long for the rest of the Gryffindors and Slytherins to show up. They all remained silent, as they waited.

Nervousness could be found on nearly all of their faces. Malfoy was the only one that looked remotely calm. After a couple minutes wait, Professor Snape came sweeping down the hall and descended upon them. They all hurried into the classroom, once he got the door unlocked and motioned them to do so.

Blake took a spot at one of the workbenches in the back of the room. He wasn't at all surprised, when Daphne and Blaise joined him. After everyone was settled, Professor Snape began to take roll. Blake felt his stomach sink further, when a hateful sneer crossed the Professor's face, as he called his name. He felt worse for Neville though. The Professor actually glared at the blond boy and made a crack about melting cauldrons despite celebrity status. Neville, who hadn't looked all that good before class, seemed to grow even paler. Daphne and Blaise snickered with the rest of the Slytherins, but soon quieted at the look Blake gave them.

Once Professor Snape had finished taking roll, he looked up and his black eyes swept over the class. Blake felt a slight probing of Legilimency, when the man's cold eyes connected with his. Blake immediately noted that Professor Snape was nearly as good as his father. It was hard to pinpoint what exactly the Professor was looking for, as he didn't seem to be actually trying to actively seek out his thoughts or memories. Blake settled for allowing the intrusion briefly and then quickly looking away in order to break the connection.

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion-making." Professor Snape began in a caressing whisper that pulled in their attention and held it easily. "As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses...I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death – if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach."

The entire class hung in silence at the end of the speech. Blake saw several Gryffindors exchange wary glances, while many of the Slytherins were still giving Professor Snape their full attention. Once again, Professor Snape's eyes seemed to settle on him. However,

the man's attention was quickly diverted to Neville and Ronald at the front of the room.

"Today, you'll be making a simple potion that cures boils." Professor Snape said and flicked his wand at the board. Suddenly, a list of brewing instructions appeared against the black slate. "You'll work in groups of two."

Daphne immediately stepped closer to Blake and sent a triumphant look at Blaise.

"Mr. Knight, you'll work with Ms. Granger. Ms. Greengrass work with Mr. Zabini." Professor Snape cut in. "The rest of you pair off."

Daphne didn't look too happy, as she moved around Blake, so that she could work with Blaise. Hermione turned in her seat to look at Blake expectantly. He raised an eyebrow at her and nodded to the spot Daphne just left. She hurriedly gathered her things and moved back to their table.

"There was more room to work where I was sitting. We would have had the entire workbench to ourselves." Hermione told him, as she set her things down.

"I like it better here." Blake stated simply and started setting up the cauldron.

"But we're so far away from the board." Hermione protested.

"I don't know about you, Blake, but I can read the board just fine from here." Blaise commented with a superior look aimed at Hermione. "Why anyone would want to move closer to the Longbottom-and-Weasley-explosion-waiting-to-happen is beyond me."

"Please, that Patil girl and Brown will be the ones to cause catastrophe first." Daphne said with a scornful look aimed at the two girls, who were over by the ingredients cabinet, squealing over having to touch horned slugs.

Blake couldn't hold back a laugh, as Parvati dropped one out of its container and onto her shoe. She started screaming and kicked it away from her. Professor Snape swooped down on them angrily.

"I'll go get the ingredients then." Hermione said in a sharp huff.

"Stick in the mud that one." Blaise commented, as she walked away.

"I have to play nice, Father's orders." Blake told them with a slight scowl.

"We don't have to be nice, do we?" Daphne asked with a raised eyebrow, while indicating to herself and Blaise. "Because, Longbottoms is stretching it."

"I didn't say anything about Longbottom." Blake protested.

"You didn't have to." Blaise commented. "He has your protection for whatever reason. It's been plain to see all week."

"Back to the question, I don't have to be nice to her, do I?" Daphne asked with complete seriousness. "I mean look at her hair, and the way she just runs around butting into people's business...she is so uncivilized."

"No, Daphne, you don't have to be nice." Blake assured her.

"Thank Merlin." Daphne said, before leaving to get the ingredients that she and Blaise would need for their potion.

"You realize she would have hexed you, right?" Blaise asked with amusement in his voice, as he set a fire under the cauldron he and Daphne would be using.

"She could have tried." Blake said smugly with a private smile. An adult wizard would have difficulty landing a hex on him, let alone a first year student at Hogwarts.

The cauldron in front of Blake was just beginning to really heat up, when Hermione came back with the ingredients. She set them all out on the workbench in the order that they would need to be added.

"It says to slice open the horned slugs first and then add the pus. Stir 6 times clockwise. Wait ten minutes. Then crush the snakes' fangs. And –" Hermione began rattling off and pointing to each ingredient.

"Relax, Miss Hermione." Blake cut in and picked up the horned slugs. He set them down in front of him. He took up his potions knife and began to slice them vertically open with practiced precision. She stared at his work with a hint of surprise and jealousy. He scooped the slugs up and added them into the cauldron, while simultaneously adding the pus, as he had seen his father do before. He stirred the cauldron six times clockwise, before dimming the flame a bit and letting it set to simmer. "It's not my first time in a potions lab." He told her in way of explanation. "Go ahead and crush up the snakes' fangs. When the base turns a light shade of green, add them in."

"The instructions say to wait ten minutes." Hermione refuted and gestured to the board.

"When it turns a light shade of green, add them in." Blake said again in a pointed tone. "The ten minutes is an estimate, sometimes the reaction happens sooner and sometime the reaction happens later. Just trust me."

"Why should I?" She demanded. "The instructions clearly state –"

"The instructions were written to be fool proof, so that morons wouldn't completely mess this up. The same with the potions text we were instructed to get." Blake said, cutting her off. "Any good potions text –"

"So, you're saying that Professor Snape doesn't know how to give instructions or select our potions text?" Hermione asked sharply. "You really shouldn't –"

"Is there a problem here?" Professor Snape asked in a long drawl, as he approached their bench.

"No problem at all, sir." Blake said with a sweet, innocent smile directed at the man.

"Actually, there –" Hermione began huffily.

"There is one question that we do have." Blake cut in. "We have added our slugs and pus. The instructions state to stir clockwise for six turns and then wait ten minutes. We wanted to know if we should

wait the ten minutes, or if we should wait until the base takes on a very light shade of green."

"The latter of the two is preferred. That is, if you can manage it." Professor Snape bit out.

"Thank you." Blake said with a polite smile and then turned to Hermione. "That was our only question, right?"

She shot him a look, but nodded. Professor Snape's eyes darted between them several times, before he turned on his heel and left to check on some of the other Gryffindors. He had only made it a few steps away from their table, before having to rush to the front of the room to prevent Dean and Seamus from causing an explosion.

"Crush the snakes' fangs." Blake instructed, while setting said mentioned ingredient in front of Hermione. He picked up the beetle eyes for himself.

"Who exactly do you think you are?" Hermione demanded of Blake heatedly.

Daphne slammed her knife down on the work table and glared at Hermione. "You have no right to talk to him like that, you peasant. His very blood and magic entitle him to his position. He has more right than anyone to act and do as he pleases. Not that it's any of your business."

"Daphne." Blake said warningly, but he recognized her words all too well. He had thought it earlier, when reading his father's response, that Daphne's father might be a part of the Knight's Blade. Now, he was absolutely sure that that was the case. He gave her a hard look and said. "Leave it be."

Daphne nodded stiffly and immediately backed down. She picked up her knife and set about puncturing her beetle eyes. Blake sighed, as he watched her. After a moment, he turned to Hermione. The girl was looking fairly upset and was glaring at Daphne.

"Your ignorance of our world will be your down fall." Blake told her seriously with a hint of anger. "I am Blake Alexander Knight, son of Tomas Isaiah Knight, bonded heir to the Noble and Most Ancient House of Knight. Those words may mean nothing to you now, but I

assure you that if you read what you were given this morning, you'd understand exactly who it is that I think I am and precisely how grave of a mistake it is for you to speak to me, as if I am below you and am obligated to answer your incessant questions. Now, you can either help me with the potion or you can just stay out of the way, but either way, you will ask nothing more of me."

Hermione angrily reached out and picked up the snakes' fangs. She placed them in her stone grinder and set to work silently. Blake checked on how the potion was progressing and then began puncturing the beetle eyes. When it was time, he had Hermione add the snakes' fang powder and stir counterclockwise three times. He then add in the beetle eyes and two ounces of salamander's blood, before he stirred the cauldron an additional seven times and brightened the flame underneath, so that it would come to a boil.

"When it turns maroon, regardless of if it is at a full boil or not, add in the nettles." Blake told Hermione, while he brought the dittany to him and began shredding it.

Blake continued to work with Hermione in a silence that was only broken, when he gave her altered instructions to the ones on the board. She never said anything in response. It was when they had just gotten done taking their cauldron off the flame and adding their porcupine quills that screams sounded from the front of the room. He looked up to see that Neville and Ronald had melted their cauldron and boils were erupting all over their skin.

"You idiots." Professor Snape snapped, as he descended upon them. "I suppose you added the porcupine quills before taking the cauldron off the fire?"

Both Neville and Ronald whimpered in response, as more and more boils spread over their skin.

"Go to the hospital wing." Professor Snape growled, while disdainfully eyeing the mess they had managed to make.

An hour later, Blake and Hermione had a perfect cauldron of the Boil-Cure Potion. Though, they were the only Gryffindors to accomplish such. Barely even fifteen minutes after Neville's and Ronald's accident, Parvati had managed to explode hers and Lavender's cauldron onto herself and those surrounding her, as

Professor Snape swooped around them, snapping at every little mistake and taking points from Gryffindor for every one of their missteps. Blake thought that Parvati looked more shaken from Professor Snape's presence, than the boils erupting on her skin, as she, Lavender, Rachel, and Nicola left to go to the hospital wing. At this point Dean and Seamus were the only Gryffindors left outside of Blake and Hermione. They had Professor Snape hovering over them, until they managed to finish some sort of concoction that was spitting sparks.

"Zero for the day, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Finnigan." Professor Snape sneered with pleasure and vanished the contents of their cauldron.

The professor then stormed back to Blake and Hermione. Hermione shifted uneasily, but Blake just continued to clean up their area. He didn't even look up at the man, as he examined their potion. He wanted nothing more than to tell the professor off. If the man hadn't spent the entire lesson trying to scare them, then the others might have actually stood a chance at completing the assignment to an acceptable quality.

"Knight." Professor Snape said in a demanding tone.

Blake reluctantly looked up. He felt a brush of legilimency as soon as his eyes connected with Professor Snape's. He felt the man searching for his knowledge and experience with potions.

"Yes, Professor?" Blake asked, while controlling the thoughts and images that Professor Snape had access to.

"Did you let Ms. Granger do any of the work at all?" Professor Snape asked with a sneer set on his face. "Or did you just order her around in an attempt to protect your grade?"

"She did half the work, Professor." Blake assured.

"Ms. Granger, you'll be getting a zero for the day. Mr. Knight, this is Outstanding work." Professor Snape drawled. The corners of his lips pulled tight, as Hermione opened her mouth to protest. "If you have a problem with it, Ms. Granger, take it up with Mr. Knight."

"If she gets a zero, then I get a zero." Blake said sharply. His anger towards the man rising within him. "You can't just give me a grade

and not give her one. She did half the work! You will either give her the same grade as me or give me a zero."

"I don't think so, but I will give you a detention. Tonight at 6:00." Professor Snape said cruelly, before walking off.

Blake stormed out of the potions classroom not even ten minutes later. Hermione looked ready to cry, as she glowered at him, as if it really was all his fault that Professor Snape was the biggest git on the planet. Dean and Seamus sympathized with her, since they too had gotten zeroes. The three had left the potions classroom with nasty looks aimed towards him. Blake didn't doubt that his other housemates would see it the same.

"What are you so mad about?" Blaise asked, while walking up next to him. "You got an O. Daphne and I only got an E."

"He did get detention." Daphne pointed out.

"That man is just fowl." Blake hissed, ignoring their comments. "If he didn't spend the whole lesson yelling at everyone, then they might have actually been able to make the potion. And Hermione did to do half the work."

"You're looking at this wrong." Blaise told him. "You got a good grade, an O even. Who cares if he was a jerk to the rest of the Gryffindors?"

"I do!" Blake exclaimed.

"Okay, you care." Blaise agreed and held his hands up in mock surrender at the glare Blake was giving him.

"I'm going to talk to Professor McGonagall." Blake declared, as they headed up the dungeon stairs. "At the very least, he can't just give Hermione a zero like that."

"You're going to make Professor Snape really mad." Daphne warned. "It's just Granger, can't you let it go? You don't even like her."

"It doesn't matter, if I like her or not." Blake refuted. "It's not right. She did half the work. She deserves the same credit."

"At least wait until after your detention." Blaise advised seriously.

"No, I'm going to talk to her right now." Blake proclaimed firmly, as they entered the Great Hall.

"Blake, you are just going to make things so much more difficult for yourself." Daphne tried to reason. "Professor Snape is not a man to mess with."

"I don't care." Blake said, as he headed for the Head Table.

"Come on, Blake, leave it alone." Blaise encouraged. "You don't really want to do this, not over Granger."

"It isn't right." Blake said fiercely and rounded on the two. "She did half the work. She deserves the credit."

"Let her deal with it then." Blaise said with a gesture to the Gryffindor table.

"He put her grade on me." Blake told him with narrowed eyes, before turning and continuing on his path to the Head Table.

"Blake, please, you're making a mistake." Daphne called after him.

Blake stopped again and turned to look at her with anger burning in his eyes. "The mistake would be to let him get away with it. I won't stand for such injustice and cruelty! It's an abuse of power and completely corrupt."

"Can't you just leave it alone, like everyone else?" Daphne pleaded.

"It is on my name, on my honor!" Blake said firmly. "I can't just leave it alone and turn a blind-eye, like everyone else."

Without waiting for a response from either Daphne or Blaise, Blake turned and headed up to the Head Table. Apparently, his two friends got the message, because neither one tried to stop him again. By the time he reached the Head Table, the Professors, who had already come down for lunch, were looking at him expectantly. He headed for Professor McGonagall, but Headmaster Dumbledore motioned him over. Blake's steps towards Professor McGonagall

faltered, and he gripped at the strap of his shoulder bag tensely. He eyed the old wizard warily.

"We can stay right here with plenty of people around, I assure you." Headmaster Dumbledore said kindly, practically reading Blake's thoughts.

Blake hesitated for a moment longer, before stepping up to him. He straightened his shoulders and steadily met the man's sapphire eyes.

"Now, what is troubling you so, Mr. Knight?" Headmaster Dumbledore asked, while his eyes roamed over Blake in a studying fashion. "I couldn't help but notice that you seemed very distressed upon entering the Great Hall today, which I have come to notice is very unusual for you."

"It's your Potions' professor, sir." Blake stated. "He is abusing his power and is unjustly prejudiced towards certain students he instructs."

"Ah...Professor Snape." Headmaster Dumbledore said with a suddenly professional air. "And your complaint is?"

"While he may be a Potions Master and know the material very well, he is far from being a capable teacher." Blake said seriously, while maintaining a firm hold on his anger and forcing a polite tone. "I was the only one in all of the first year Gryffindors to receive a grade. Everyone else was given a zero for various reasons. Six of us were sent to the hospital wing due to one cauldron melting and another exploding. Neither accident would have happened, if Professor Snape did not swarm and hover and snap and take off points for every little mistake. It is bad enough knowing that we will be working with dangerous materials, but then he runs around praising his Slytherins, while doing everything possible to strike fear into the Gryffindors through verbal abuse and threats.

"What I found profoundly unacceptable was that despite the fact that Miss Hermione and I were working together as partners, Professor Snape chose to grade me with an O and her with a zero." Blake said with a hard edge. "His stated reasoning was that I did not allow Miss Hermione to do the work, and therefore, she did not deserve the grade. I do admit that I chose for us to work from intuition instead of time-intervals, in order to give us the best possible end product. This

resulted in me needing to assist Miss Hermione in determining the proper time to add the ingredients. But she did do half the work. She just did it upon my instruction. Which should be understandable, considering that today was her first time in a potions lab. Headmaster, she more than deserves a fair grade."

"So let me get this straight." Headmaster Dumbledore began seriously. "You went to potions class, where you were paired up with Miss Granger to make the assigned potion. Several of your housemates were injured by their failed attempts as class progressed, which you attribute to Professor Snape's teaching methods. At the end of class you were graded with an O and Miss Granger was refused a grade, due to your choice of working from an advance potion theory verses the standard timing. Upon finally being excused, you walked out of the potions classroom and immediately came here to lodge a complaint against Professor Snape, despite the fact that he did not do anything in particular to you? Does that sum up the day's events?"

"Well, Professor Snape did give me detention, sir." Blake admitted. "But that was entirely within his right. After he refused Miss Hermione a grade, I lost my temper and took a less than respectful tone with him. Other than that, yes, that sums up the day's events."

"So this is not a complaint towards your treatment, but rather towards the treatment of your housemates?" Headmaster Dumbledore clarified.

"Yes, sir." Blake agreed. "Professor Snape left me alone for the most part, but he was very vicious to my housemates. It is an abuse of his power as a professor, Headmaster. It is not right, and it is not okay. My honor will not let me just stand aside and say nothing, to do so would make me no better than him."

"Your honor..." Headmaster Dumbledore said with recognition. "Your father prizes his honor as well."

"Without honor, we are but mortal men on a downward spiral to our own self-destruction." Blake told the headmaster seriously.

"And with it?" Headmaster Dumbledore inquired.

"We have true purpose: a hundred reasons to live, a thousand reasons to die, and very few reasons that are selfishly our own." Blake said passionately.

"I tell you what, Mr. Knight." Headmaster Dumbledore said decisively, after a moment of thought. "You have my word, as an honorable man, that you will not experience another potions class like the one you did today."

"And Miss Hermione's grade?" Blake asked.

"Shall be corrected accordingly." Headmaster Dumbledore assured. "Now, will you give me your word that you will not press this issue any farther and that no outside parties will become involved?"

"I give you my word that if matters are not resolved acceptably, then I will come to you first before pressing the issue or bring it to an outside party." Blake promised.

"I suppose that shall have to suffice." Headmaster Dumbledore agreed.

"Thank you, sir." Blake said sincerely.

"You should go eat lunch now, Mr. Knight." Headmaster Dumbledore dismissed.

Blake nodded and turned away from the Head Table. Several people stared and whispered, but he paid them no mind and assumed his regular spot at the Gryffindor table. He had just gotten a sandwich put together, when Professor Snape came stalking into the hall. Blake kept his focus on his sandwich, as he began to eat. It was only the murmuring that erupted through the hall once again that drew his attention to the Head Table a few minutes later. Professor Snape looked absolutely fuming and a disappointed frown was etched on Headmaster Dumbledore's face. Several of the other professors looked far from pleased. Blake met Professor Snape's angry eyes and held the man's gaze. He felt the push of a legitimacy attack, but the distance between them was too great. His focus was quickly snapped away from Professor Snape by someone sitting down across from him. He looked over to see Percy.

"What part of don't draw his attention to you did you not understand?" Percy inquired with a worried glance towards the Head Table.

"He got on my nerves." Blake answered stiffly and plucked up an orange out of the nearest fruit basket.

"He gets on everyone's nerves." Percy pointed out.

"And yet, none of you say anything about it." Blake returned.

"I told you. He's not one to cross." Percy said seriously.

"And neither am I." Blake said point-blank. "I refuse to put up with his behavior for the next seven years. He abuses his power and that isn't right. Someone needs to say something."

"He'll come after you now." Percy warned. "You've just brought down all kinds of trouble on yourself. He'll get you for every little thing you do."

Blake shrugged. He wasn't really too concerned about it. From the headmaster's reaction, he got the distinct impression that the old wizard did not want him to get his father involved and was willing to compensate to prevent it. The way Headmaster Dumbledore had wanted to be sure that his complaint was not for his own mistreatment, and that no unjust action had been taken against him personally, also suggested that the headmaster knew that if such a thing were to occur, then there would be trouble. He had made it perfectly clear to Headmaster Dumbledore that he would not put up with Professor Snape's actions. He didn't think the headmaster would allow Professor Snape enough leeway for the man to come after him in such a fashion.

"I take it that potions didn't go well, then?" Percy asked.

"Far from it." Blake declared, before popping a piece of orange into his mouth. He chewed and swallowed it before speaking again. "So, what did you have this morning?"

"A double period of History of Magic." Percy said flatly.

"Brutal." Blake commented sympathetically.

"What do you have after lunch?" Percy inquired.

"First years get Friday afternoons off." Blake reminded with a cheeky smile.

"You should start on your homework." Percy advised. "You'd be surprised how it can start piling up."

"It's already done, outside of the assignment we just got from Professor Snape." Blake dismissed.

A moment of surprise flickered across Percy's face.

"Work hard, play hard – that is the Knight's philosophy." Blake told him with a grin.

"Do you have plans for the weekend then?" Percy inquired.

"Exploring." Blake shrugged, before brightening slightly. "Want to come? You could show me some of those short cuts you were talking about."

"I have a lot of homework and studying to do." Percy said with a shake of his head. "Besides, won't you be hanging out with your Slytherin friends?"

Blake frowned. "Blaise has a pile of homework and Daphne doesn't want to hike up and down the castle. She says that I can show her all the good short cuts, once I've found them. She's a bit lazy like that."

"Slytherins don't do work that they can get others to do for them." Percy informed.

Blake just nodded at the comment and returned his attention to his lunch. In his silence, Percy decided to tell him about all the homework and studying he had to do over the weekend. Blake thought Percy was well suited for Ravenclaw and that the Hat probably had a hard time choosing. Percy really did remind him of how Carter was, when he first met him. Percy's long winded explanation of his weekend plans was all about setting rules and goals for himself, as well as a very strict timed-out schedule.

Eventually, the warning bell for afternoon classes rang. Percy bid him a hasty goodbye and then rushed off to Arithmacy.

Blake was met outside the Great Hall by Daphne and Blaise. After agreeing to put their things in their dorms and then meet up out on the lawn for a game of exploding snaps, Blake rushed off to Gryffindor tower. Twenty minutes later, he was sitting down by the lake with Daphne and Blaise and passing out the snaps cards. They played several rounds and goofed around a bit. At one point, Daphne decided to be a sore loser, and she chunked all the snaps cards at Blake and Blaise, causing the cards to explode all over them. They retaliated by chasing her down and throwing her in the lake. She didn't let them get away with it though. She dragged Blaise down with her, and soon after that, Blake found himself being dunked by a joint effort of the two. It was an hour later that three soaked, but cheerful first years trudged back into the castle to get changed, before they headed to dinner.

Blake's dinner passed by as uneventful as many of his other meals had over the week. When he reported to his detention at 6:00, Professor Snape barked at him to clean a large stack of cauldrons. The man didn't say one word to him after that except to excuse him, once he had finished. The near two hours it took him to clean all of the cauldrons had been a very tense two hours. Blake eagerly left the potions classroom. He was more than ready to get out from under Professor Snape's beady, black eyes. He ended up getting back to Gryffindor tower only minutes before first and second year curfew took effect.

He had barely gotten two steps into the common room, when he had arms full of a bushy haired witch. He awkwardly patted her on the back, not quite sure what to do about the situation. When she pulled back, she had tears in her eyes.

"Thank you." She told him genuinely with a sniff. "Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall told me what you did. They gave me my grade. They gave me an O!"

"You're welcome, Miss Hermione." Blake told her with a smile. "It was your grade to begin with. Professor Snape had no right to withhold it from you."

"This afternoon, I began reading the information you gave me from Lord Knight. I've been just terrible to you all week, haven't I? Oh, god, I shouldn't have hugged you." Hermione said in a sudden panic.

"Relax." Blake told her with a hint of amusement. He'd preferred being hugged to being assaulted with questions he didn't care to answer. She nodded and bit her lip. "If you'll pardon me, Miss Hermione, I have homework to do."

"Oh...of course." Hermione agreed and move out of his way.

Blake gave her a smile, before heading for the boy's dormitory. Several people tracked his movements across the common room, which he purposefully ignored. He wasn't surprised to see Neville beg off of playing another round of gobble stones with Dean, Seamus, and Ronald, before getting up and heading for the boy's dormitory as well. They were only a few flights up, when Neville broke the silence.

"I need some serious help with potions. You are working on potions, right?" Neville asked with a hint of desperation.

"What, didn't you enjoy having your cauldron melt all over you?" Blake asked teasingly.

"No." Neville said put out.

"Sorry, I was hanging out with Daphne and Blaise all afternoon. I shouldn't have teased." Blake apologized at hearing Neville's defeated tone.

"So, you'll help me?" Neville asked hopefully.

"Haven't I helped you all week?" Blake asked, upon reaching the door to their dorm.

"This is different." Neville said unsurely. "I need serious help...more than a quick question and answer. I really don't understand much of anything we did in class. Let alone, what I've read on the subject."

Blake stiffened slightly on his way over to his bed. He hesitated in answering, understanding completely what Neville was talking about. "My father..."

"C-can't we just...ignore what they say? It's just homework help..." Neville trailed off pleadingly.

"Ask someone else." Blake said shortly.

"You're the best. You got an O." Neville argued.

"Ask someone else." Blake repeated, while pulling his potions text out of his book bag.

"They don't have to know, no one does." Neville assured.

"He'll know." Blake said without a doubt. He knew he was practically incapable of lying to his father. After he put on his Heir's Ring, his ability to lie to him seemed to get worse. He was already stretching the rule of 'no contact outside of what is required'. Blake sighed heavily and turned to face Neville. "I can't. I'm sorry."

"It's stupid, you know, that they tell us that we can't talk." Neville said defiantly.

Blake gave him no response. The truth was he wasn't sure he disagreed with Neville, yet he wasn't really sure if he agreed with him either. His father knew best, he did know that much. If his father said it was too much of a risk, then it was too much of a risk.

"Please, Blake." Neville begged.

"No." Blake told him flatly and climbed up on his bed. He pulled his homework materials to him. He flipped his text open to the right page and set about dissecting the instructions given for a potion to cure hiccups. After a minute of watching him, Neville left the room.

Wow it has been a long time since I updated. I apologize for making you wait so long, and I thank you for your patience. Life got a bit busy there for a while. Hopefully, the wait shouldn't be too long for the next update. I hope you enjoyed the chapter though.

A little side note...there are many things you won't see, as this is being told from what Blake feels, sees, and hears. However, I imagine his father and Dumbledore have sat down and spoken on several occasion over the few months leading up to Blake getting his

acceptance letter. I feel that the two men would have argued and finally come to terms on certain things regarding Blake being at Hogwarts. I'll try to hint towards what I'm thinking within the story, where the outside story is concerned. However, I won't be doing a bunch of point of views. This is Blake's story. If it is something majorly important, I'll clarify it at the end of the chapter.

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Asking for Trouble

Blake stared at the shining gold surface. His reflection looked back at him, slightly morphed from the curve of the badge. He smiled. He couldn't really help it. Here was further proof of James Potter's existence. Written across the front of the small, gold plate in an engrave script was:

James Potter
Gryffindor Captain
1976 – 1978

Lightly etched behind the writing was a broom stick crossing over a Quaffle. James had been a chaser, and if judging from the Quidditch Cups won during his years of play, he'd been a good one. Warmth spread through Blake's heart, as he thought of joining the Gryffindor Quidditch Team next year. In a way, he felt it would bring him closer to the man he never truly knew. He might not play Chaser, like his father did, but he'd be on the team and that would be enough.

Blake moved along the trophy case, scanning the other various mementoes from the time his parents had attended Hogwarts. He noted that the House Cup had gone to Gryffindor during his parents' years, but sadly saw that for the last six years it had gone to Slytherin. He'd do his best to change that. He'd do his part to bring such a prestigious award to his house, as it seemed his parents had.

He stopped again, when he came to the list of Prefects. A second smile graced his face at seeing his mother's name: 'Lily Evans 1975-1977'. Just like with seeing his father's badge, his mother's existence and life was further solidified in his mind. She was here. She had been a Prefect. Blake briefly wondered whether he might be a Prefect as well. He could certainly try to earn that honor. Not only would James and Lily be proud, but his father would as well.

It was what he came across next in his perusing that gave him true pause. So very reminiscent of their headstone in Godric's Hollow Cemetery, his father's and mother's Head Boy and Head Girl badges solemnly rested side by side.

A remorseful sadness filled Blake. It had been a little over ten months since he visited their graves, but he still vividly remember how he had felt at seeing their names carved in stone for the first

time. To see the tributes to them here brought back the anguish he felt that day. It reminded him how very unfair it was that he never got a chance to know them. He loved his father, but it would have been nice, if he could have at least known James and Lily Potter long enough that he could remember them.

Blake swallowed his sadness and stepped back from the case. He'd been in the room for hours now, just looking at the awards won by figures of his past. As he knew it would be, the Knight name was sprinkled all over the room from the time of Hogwarts' founding to the last few years before the forming of the Ministry. His parents' honors were just a continuation of the achievements he'd needed to live up to.

Before leaving the room, Blake cast one last look around at all the trophies and awards. He sighed contentedly. He may not be in Knight Mansion, but in a way, he was home. His ancestors and parents had walked these halls just as he walked them now. Hogwarts Castle was their home for seven years just as it would be his. He vowed to find his place here and rise to his potential, as his father expected and all his ancestors would have wanted.

"I will not disappoint you." Blake promised, before giving a respectful bow to the memories of those that came before him and then exited the room.

It was Sunday night. He met no one in the halls on his way back to Gryffindor tower. Everyone was busy finishing up the homework that they left to the last minute. He gave the password to the Fat Lady, when he reached the entrance to Gryffindor Tower. He got several wary – yet curious – glances, as he weaved through the common room and headed for the staircase that led to the boys' dorms. Before he could get there, however, someone called out behind him.

"Blake, wait."

Blake turned to see Hermione looking at him nervously, biting her lip in concentration. The bushy haired girl hadn't talked to him since Friday evening. He tilted his head in question, as he waited for what she had to say.

"I...I just wanted to ask...if you would consider helping me with our potions essay, and if you would possibly advise me on a reading list

of books that could help me further understand what you were talking about in class." Hermione said in a rush. Blake immediately noted that there was not an ounce of bossiness about what she said or the way she said it.

"It's a little late to be going to the library, but I can help you with the essay tonight." Blake told her and then glanced towards Neville, who was looking at him with anxious eyes and a sullen frown. Blake smiled. He knew how he'd get around his father's rules, while obeying them at the same time. It was time to make an attempt at getting along with his housemates. "In fact, if anyone else in our year would like some help, we can all work on the essay together. I've yet to do mine."

Neville's eyes widened at his lie. He'd seen Blake finish his essay Friday night.

"I'll just go get my books then." Hermione said excitedly and with a pleased smile. She turned and rushed for the girls' dorms.

Blake watched her go, before raising an eyebrow to Neville. Neville grinned.

"I could use some help too." Neville said, while standing up. He looked down at his three gapping friends and shrugged. He crossed the common room over to Blake, as he headed up to their dorm to get his books. Grumbling, Seamus, Dean, and Ronald got up to follow him.

"Thanks." Neville said quietly, as Blake turned with him to head up the boys' stairs.

"I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about." Blake said airily.

"Of course not." Neville agreed and rolled his eyes.

The five boys quickly grabbed their potions books and writing utensils out of their room, before heading back down to the common room. Blake grabbed One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi and Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them as well as Magical Drafts and Potions. The end result of any potion was interlinked to the properties of every ingredient add. You could not have the full

understanding of the affects of a potion without having a full understanding of what exactly caused those affects, or that was what his father said.

When Blake made it down to the Common Room, his dorm mates and Hermione were settled at one of the corner tables. He sat down between Neville and Hermione. Hermione eyes were sharp, as she watched his every move. She cocked her head curiously at seeing the two extra texts among his things.

"Okay." Blake said, while looking at the five. "Potions is – as Professor Snape said – a delicate art, but once you understand what drives it, it becomes a fairly easy one to master at a competent brewing level for anyone. The secret is understanding the components, not the process. Which is the point of dissecting the brewing instructions that you are given. Next week, we'll probably be brewing the hiccup cure potion. So if you can understand what goes into making the potion now, you'll be able to easily achieve good results in class."

Hermione raised her hand the instant he finished speaking. Blake held back an exasperated groan at the action.

"We aren't in class, Miss Hermione. Ask what you want." Blake told her patiently.

"Oh." She said with a blush. "Is the process for brewing not important at all then?"

"It's important...depending on the results you desire. That is why there are instructions given. They provide a guide to achieving a certain result, but in order to achieve said result, you must have a deeper understanding of what makes up those instructions." Blake said seriously. "Where most of you got into trouble last Friday, was when you followed the instructions given without any understanding of why things needed to be done the way they were written.

"For example: the porcupine quills needed be added after the cauldron was removed from the fire, because of the nature of the quill. They are an unconscious defense mechanism for a porcupine – reactionary on conditions applied. It makes them unstable. They need to be added to a potion in the most stable environment possible to prevent a violent and sudden reaction from occurring. By

adding them without the fire constantly changing the temperature, it allows you to curb the properties of the quills to a desired result."

"Another example is how many times and which way you stir the potion." Blake said with the full attention of those at the table. "A clockwise stir is different from a counterclockwise stir...three stirs is different from three and one-quarter stirs. You may believe there is no magic in potions, but there is. Just because you're not casting a spell doesn't mean it is not there. The ingredients you add are magical. They draw on your magic, as you add them and stir the cauldron. The direction you stir and the number of rotations you make direct your magic into the potion.

"This is another reason it is imperative that you know what you are trying to achieve. As you make a certain potion, your will, or rather the result you desire, affects the reactions that occur." Blake explained to the confused looks he was receiving.

"Your will becomes laced within the magic added to the potion." Neville said with wide-eyed understanding. "If your magic is uncontrolled, then the results will be as well. Like with casting charms."

"Exactly." Blake nodded, becoming more aware that more than just the five at the table were listening to him. "Like in charms, the reaction is there, ready to occur, but it is your will that will control what exactly happens. You can sooth a violent reaction to a calm and stable one. You can encourage the magic of the ingredients to mesh together as one, when they aren't quite compatible. The direction and the number of times you stir the potion help direct your magic, like the wand movements of a spell, but alone they aren't enough. You must know what you want with each step, in order for you to achieve the best possible result."

"That's why you said the reactions can't be pinned down to a certain time." Hermione said suddenly. "Why you always got a quicker reaction after adding the ingredients than I did. You knew what you were doing and I didn't."

"Precisely." Blake agreed. "I knew what ingredients I was adding and the result I should get from adding them. As I said, the true secret is understanding the components, not necessarily the process. Everything comes back to understanding what you are

adding and how what you are adding will affect the potion you are brewing. Without that understanding, you can't impart your will into the potion, nor will you fully grasp the importance of following each step. If you can master that understanding, then after a time, you'll begin to recognize the desired reaction, when it occurs. You'll instinctively understand when to move onto the next step, instead of depending on a set time or watching for a certain way your potion boils."

"This information could have been useful a few days ago, before we accidentally melted our cauldron all over ourselves." Ronald grumbled. "I at least would have known to take things more seriously."

"We should not have even made a potion on Friday." Blake said with a hint of anger, as he remembered the class. "Professor Snape should have provided an introductory class, covering what I'm telling you now and stressing the importance of not adding your ingredients in a half-hazard manner. It wasn't like you'd get the information out of this ridiculous book he assigned."

"This book..." Blake said with a glare at his own copy "is aimed towards a person who had already read or been through an introductory course. Not to mention, it is horribly written and filled with useless dribble. Jigger was hardly a potions prodigy and it shows. The only benefit of the text is that the instructions are written in a manner that any two year old should understand and, therefore, should prevent any major accidents...or deaths."

"You shouldn't –" Hermione began, but quickly cut herself off and held her tongue.

Blake raised an inquiring eyebrow.

"He's a professor. Professors deserve respect" She said timidly.

"True." Blake shrugged uncaringly. "He's also a cruel and spiteful person."

"A git." Ronald inserted.

"A grease haired, evil git." Seamus said in agreement.

Hermione looked more than ready to scold all of them, but Blake interrupted before she could.

"For the essay, we'll need to take a close look at the hiccup cure potion and its components. If we go over every step and analyze what is happening at that step, then you should be able to properly make the potion in our next class, since you'll actually understand the potion you're brewing." Blake said, as he picked up the book he had previously been glaring at and flipped it open to the correct page.

For the next few hours, Blake sat at the table with the five, as they looked at the potion together. His copies of *One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi* and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* were passed around the table, as they all took turns looking up the properties of the ingredients involved. Blake prompted the five in the same way that his dad had prompted him. He'd never give them the answer, but rather led them to the right conclusion. He'd stop the others and made sure everyone participate in re-explaining things, if someone seemed to fall behind. Several times he had to cut off Hermione, when she got into a ramble, so that the boys could draw their own conclusions about the reaction out of the information given.

By the time they finished, it was 10:00. Blake yawned widely, as he gathered up his books and slipped his still blank piece of parchment into his bag. Hermione caught his eye and gave him a puzzled and questioning look.

"Do you really think they would have sought out my help, if I told them I'd be straight up tutoring them?" Blake asked in a quiet whisper, as the others left the table. "This way made it seem, as if we were on a more equal footing, that I wouldn't be 'lording' over them with my 'superior knowledge'. A homework session sounded better than a tutoring session."

"You already had yours done." Hermione said knowingly.

"Since Friday night." Blake agreed with a grin, as he picked up his books and then turned away from her to head up to his dorm.

—

The next morning, Blake woke early. He quickly got dressed in a light cotton t-shirt and a pair of gym shorts. He quietly exited his dorm room and then headed out to the grounds. He made a quick trip of getting to the Entrance Hall and slipped out the large, oak doors. Once outside, he took off running for the lake. Like the last two mornings, the grounds were deserted and silent. His controlled breaths and the occasional chirp of a bird were the only things to disturb the peaceful quiet.

Upon reaching the water, he took five minutes to stretch his slightly warmed up muscles, before heading off along the shore of the lake. When he reached the edge of the forbidden forest, he cut right and ran parallel to the dark woods, passing the front gates, and then heading uphill towards the Quidditch pitch. His path took him along the wide arc of the student boundaries. Eventually, he reached the edge of the lake once again and came back to his start point. He walked a bit further and then headed over to a flat portion of the lawn.

He settled himself in the grass, before starting in on a form of meditation and stretching. He moved slowly with his eyes closed, as he ran through a series of stretches. He pushed everything out of his mind and focused on his breathing and the energies within him. He could feel his magic rolling through him, slithering just beneath the surface of his skin and wrapping his form in totality. It flowed in him, as if it were completely one with his blood, one with his muscles, and one with his being. The years of wandless practice had expunged his core. His magic was now free within him, ready to be call and used to his will with no restraints except his own limits.

He called his power into his movements, as his stretches flowed quicker and became sharp and concise, translating into fighting forms. He ran through all the stances, strikes, kicks, and jumps that his father had taught him. All the while, he focused his mind internally on each breath he took and each shift of magical energy within him. As with mock fighting with his father, he could feel a heightened awareness snap around him and could feel the empowerment of his body with his magic swirling and moving with him.

When he finished, he had a half hour to get back to his dorm and get changed, before breakfast would start. He quickly made his way back to Gryffindor Tower and up to the first-year boys' dormitory.

Neville and Dean were up and about, while Ron and Seamus slept on.

"Morning." Dean greeted to Blake, as Blake grabbed his uniform out of his wardrobe.

"Morning." Blake returned and headed for the bathroom.

Blake showered quickly and got dressed. When he walked back into the room to get his books, Neville was working on waking Ron, while Dean tried to wake Seamus. Both looked to be fighting an uphill battle that they were sure to lose. Blake grinned at the two, before waving his wand over Ron's bed and then doing the same over Seamus. He quickly darted out of the room, as his spells took effect. There were two simultaneous splashes of water that were followed by screams and then a brief pause.

"KNIGHT!"

At the sound of pounding feet, Blake rushed down the rest of the stairs to the common room. He silently laughed to himself, as he left the tower and headed down to breakfast.

"You're happy." Percy commented, as he caught up with him not too far from the common room. "Excited about Thursday, then?"

"What's happening Thursday?" Blake asked with interest and cocked his to the side to get a better look at the fifth-year red head.

"First-year flying lesson. It was on the notice board." Percy told him simply.

"Well..." Blake said, as his grin widened. "This day just keeps getting better and better."

"I'm a bit afraid to ask what made it so good to begin with." Percy said unsurely, while studying Blake's change in mood.

"I dumped ice water on Ron and Seamus." Blake said with mischief alight in his eyes.

"Blake." Percy said in a warning tone that reminded Blake way too much of Carter.

"They needed a good wake up call." Blake defended. "You wouldn't want them to be late for class, would you?"

"I'm sure there was a better way to wake them than drowning them in ice water." Percy reasoned.

"Nope." Blake quipped with a large grin. "Neville had already stolen all of Ron's blankets and was repeatedly poking him. He still refused to get up, so it was desperate times...desperate measures and all that."

Blake gave Percy an innocent look, as Percy's eyes narrowed at him.

"I took no enjoyment from it." Blake lied with a straight face.

"Sure you didn't." Percy said just shaking his head.

"Come on." Blake said and pulled on Percy's arm, so he would speed up. "Today is going to be good. I can just feel it."

"Did you already get into the tea or something?" Percy asked, as Blake drug him down various hallways and stairs.

"Hardly. I don't drink tea." Blake scoffed.

By the time they reached the Great Hall, Blake's mood hadn't diminished one bit. Percy just shook his head, as Blake darted over to Gryffindor table. Blake hungrily dipped up his choice of breakfast, as Percy calmly sat down across from him.

"You read through everything yet?" Blake asked, after swallowing a bite of apple.

"Yes, and I found it to quite interesting." Percy said with a nod, while pouring a cup tea.

"I was thinking about it this weekend." Blake said assertively. "The goblins will not want to open your accounts, not even tentatively, without a face to face meeting. Your best bet would be to go to Gringotts over winter break and make your request then. For now, I can work with you on your horrible, though not terrible, posture and your lacking knowledge of table manners. For example, you need to

get your elbows off the table. The table is for food, not for you to rest upon."

At Blake's comment about posture and table manners, Percy immediately removed his elbows from the table and sat up a bit straighter.

"Don't fidget." Blake said, as Percy began to look nervous. "From now on you will move with confidence and grace. You will not hold your head low in shame or high in arrogance. Understood?"

"Yes." Percy said firmly with a nod, before picking up his fork to eat his scrambled eggs.

"Percy." Blake said, getting the older boy's attention. He held up his own hand to show how he was gripping his fork. Percy quickly adjusted his grip to match Blake's.

For the rest of the meal, Blake watched Percy closely and constantly corrected any slip up he made. By the time Blake headed off for Herbology, Percy seemed utterly frustrated with himself. Blake just gave him a reassuring smile and left the Prefect to head off to his own class.

In Herbology, they were moving on to a new plant, so they were told to switch up partners. Blake was about to partner up with Hermione and Justin Finch-Fletchley, when Neville came over and drug him into a group with him and Dean.

"We were one short." Neville said under the questioning eyes of Professor Sprout. She seemed about to say something about it, but just walked off towards the front of the greenhouse instead.

"Neville." Blake growled in warning under his breath at the blond boy.

"Yes, partner?" Neville said with a large, innocent grin.

"Are you trying to get me in trouble?" Blake hissed.

"No more than you were trying to get yourself in trouble last night." Neville said smugly and then leaned over and whispered. "We're partners for this week. Now you have to talk to me."

"So very Slytherin, Longbottom." Blake whispered back with narrowed eyes.

"No more snake like than your actions yesterday." Neville retorted just as quietly, the smile never leaving his face. "Though, when you hang out with them all week, I should have expected as much."

"Leave Daphne and Blaise out of this." Blake said sharply.

"Sure, sure, partner." Neville said happily.

"Knight! Longbottom!"

Both Blake and Neville looked to the front of the class to see Professor Sprout staring at them pointedly. She didn't look as scary as Professor McGonagall, but her displeasure came across loud and clear.

"May I begin class, or do you need a few more minutes?" She asked impatiently.

Blake and Neville mumbled out apologies and then settled in to listen to the lecture on Fluxweed.

When the class ended, Blake left the greenhouse for break. He smiled up at the sun, savoring its rays. He could already feel the cool autumn chill in the light morning breeze. The last of summer would soon come to an end. Blake had barely stepped into the open courtyard, when he was assaulted by Daphne.

"Two days!" Daphne exclaimed dramatically. "I haven't so much as gotten to talk to you in two bloody days."

"That is hardly my fault." Blake said with a shrug, as they went over to their corner and sat down in the sunlit alcove.

"She's been the most annoying." Blaise said grudgingly. "It took me twice as long to do my homework with her yammering my ear off."

"I don't yammer." Daphne said stubbornly to Blaise, before rounding back on Blake. "Do you know how boring life is without you around? You left me with only this insulting child to talk to."

"I told you. I was going exploring. You're the one who didn't want to come." Blake pointed out.

"Did you find anything good secret passageways?" Blaise asked, jumping on the subject, before Daphne could start in on a rant about Blake's last comment.

"Of course, that was the whole point." Blake said with a smirk and mystery dance in his eyes.

Daphne made a face that said she was less than amused with him at the moment.

"Oh come on, Daphne." Blake sighed. "It couldn't have been that bad."

She just turned her face and stuck her nose in the air. This only caused Blake and Blaise to snicker.

"Seriously, Blake, what'd you find?" Blaise asked.

Blake launched into a detailed explanation of the passageways he found over the weekend, though he didn't tell the two all of them. He'd save the real remote ones for himself. Eventually, by the end of break, Daphne stopped pouting and joined the conversation. Though, she refused to admit that she was pouting to begin with, a fact that Blaise was very adamant about. Luckily, before things could dissolve into hexes, the bell rung for their next class.

Transfigurations was neither eventful nor uneventful. Hermione had looked keen to sit with Blake, but Stephen beat her to it. Professor McGonagall gave them a very long lecture on changing a cube into a sphere, which lasted for the full period. At the end, she promised them practice time in their next class.

At lunch, excitement began mounting for their upcoming flying lessons. Seamus and Ron were loudly exchanging stories about their various flights on a broom. Blake couldn't help but notice that Neville seemed very nervous about the subject, while Dean listened with great interest. He also noted that Hermione had spent the entire break with her head buried in the first few chapters of Quidditch Through the Ages.

After lunch, Blake suffered through History of Magic. He decided to tackle the class in a different manner. He read his book and took notes, while Professor Binns droned on about the first magical war between centaurs and wizards. He managed not to fall asleep, as well as get a good outline of the chapter Professor Binns was covering. At the end of class, they were assigned their first essay.

"Come on, we need to work on Herbology." Neville said to Blake, as they left the history classroom.

"We didn't get any homework." Blake refused.

"We need to make sure our Fluxweed grows the best." Neville said seriously. "We need to do extra research in the library to make sure that it does."

Blake gave Neville a mild glare. It wasn't that he disliked Neville. It was more the opposite. However, they were walking carelessly on a very fine line in Blake's opinion. His father had extracted his promise to keep his distance from Neville. So far, he didn't feel like he was exactly keeping that promise.

Though, his father did want him to do his best, and he had promised to do his best. So that would mean that he needed his group's Fluxweed to grow to the best of their ability, didn't he?

"Okay, Neville." Blake said, giving in. "Let's go to the Library."

Neville beamed and grabbed hold of Dean, before he could escape.

"What?" The darks skin boy protest, still half asleep.

"We're going to work on Herbology, and you're coming with us." Neville said cheerfully. A bit too cheerfully, if the scowl on Dean's face was anything to go by.

—

The next few days passed in a similar manner. Neville constantly found opportunities, where it was 'necessary' for him and Blake to have contact. On Wednesday, Blake gave up on getting out of Neville's excuses. His promise to follow his father's instructions regarding the Longbottom heir continuously slipped to the back of

his mind, as Neville presented argument after argument for why they needed to be around each other. Plus, he was enjoying joking around with Neville, like he had the first time they met in Flourish and Blots.

Not only was Neville's persistence a constant, but the wild tales of flying were as well. It seemed that with each day the hype of their first flying lesson increased tenfold. Draco Malfoy went about the halls loudly complaining about first years not being allowed on House Quidditch Teams and boasting about all his past flights – all of which resulted in his narrow escape from muggles. Ron seemed to get fired up about Malfoy's boasting, and he would tell even wilder tales about his adventures on his brothers' brooms. One even involved a hang glider. Of course, Seamus was not to be out done. According to him, he practically lived on his broom for most of his childhood.

Things only ever escalated further, when Quidditch got brought into it, which ended up being quite often. Seamus and Neville argued for hours into the night on Tuesday about whether Puddlemere United was better than the Kenmare Kestrels. Originally, Ron was arguing for the Chudley Cannons, but Seamus and Neville had shut him down early. Unfortunately, Dean made a comment at the time about the ridiculousness of there even being a sport played on brooms. Ron quickly pounced on him. Their argument over which sport was far more superior than the other – Quidditch or football – lasted longer than Seamus' and Neville's argument about the best Quidditch team.

The insanity wasn't limit to flying obsessed and Quidditch enthused chatter. Hermione was going frantic about the upcoming lesson and had buried herself in books at every meal. Blake often heard her repeating flying tips under her breath in class. Several of the Hufflepuffs looked positively ill on Wednesday, when their classes were over and it was time for their flying lesson with Ravenclaw.

Blake said nothing. He wasn't about to go boasting, but he also knew that there was no amount of advice or words in a book that could help a first time flyer. Everyone's flying style was different, and everyone experienced flying for the first time differently. He found refuge with Daphne and Blaise, whenever he could. Daphne followed his lead and mentioned nothing about the upcoming lesson. The onetime Blaise brought it up, they both stared him into silence.

"There is enough lunacy going on about it. You don't need to add to it." Daphne had told Blaise sharply.

When Thursday afternoon finally came, Blake wasn't sure what he was happier about – getting back into the air or the wheel of never ending tall tales finally coming to a stop.

"Stick out your right hand over your broom," Madam Hooch called to them from the front of the green, "and say 'Up!'"

Various shouts of 'Up' sounded across the flat grass area, as both Slytherins and Gryffindors tried to call their brooms to them.

"Up." Blake said lazily. His broom jumped to his hand eager to be flown.

Daphne, who was standing beside him, had to shout at her broom a few more times. Blaise's luck was about the same. Once everyone had their brooms Madam Hooch showed them how to mount them. She walked up and down between them, correcting grips and giving advice. Malfoy was very peevish, when she told him that his grip had been wrong for years, much to the snickering of several Gryffindors.

"Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground hard." Madam Hooch instructed. "Keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet, and then come straight back down by leaning forward slightly. On my whistle – three – two –"

She cut off, as Neville went shooting into the air. Blake had noticed Neville's reluctance to tell Ron and Seamus about his past flights all week, and then today the blond boy had been extraordinarily nervous, but he didn't expect this from the Boy-Who-Survived. He craned his neck, as he watched Neville unsteadily soar into the air.

"Come back, boy!" Madam Hooch shouted.

Blake winced the second she said it. He saw Neville's nervousness turn to panic. This wasn't going to end well. With a chalk white face, Neville lost his grip; and before anyone could do anything about it, Neville hit the ground with a rather nasty thud and crack. Blake knew the sound of a broken bone, when he heard it. Merlin knew he'd

broken enough in all his training. He knew instantly that Neville had broken something.

"Broken wrist." Madam Hooch mumbled, confirming Blake's very thoughts. "Come on, boy – it's all right, up you get."

Before heading back to the castle with Neville, who had tears streaking down his face, Madam Hooch round on the rest of the class. "None of you is to move while I take this boy to the hospital wing! You leave those brooms where they are or you'll be out of Hogwarts before you can say 'Quidditch.' Come on, dear."

Blake watched sadly, as she carted Neville off. Neville would be more humiliated than anything. His wrist would be fixed in the matter of seconds, but Neville's pride had most definitely been wounded.

"Did you see his face? The great Boy-Who-Survived can't even fly." Malfoy said with mocking laughter.

Several Slytherins joined him, while the Gryffindors glared at them.

"Shut up, Malfoy!" Ron yelled with Seamus and Dean stepping up behind him.

"What are you and your little friends going to do about it, Weasel?" Pansy Parkinson asked with disdain. "Sputter at us with your blood-traitor and mudblood mouths?"

"Take that back!" Seamus yelled, while going for his wand.

"Look!" Malfoy said and darted forward. He snatched up a small glass sphere.

Blake instantly recognized it as the thing Malfoy had been trying to take off of Neville during breakfast.

"It's that stupid thing Longbottom's gran sent him." Malfoy said with a nasty smirk.

"Hand it over, Malfoy!" Ron demanded with his hand held out for the glass ball. Seamus' and Dean's attention was focus back on Malfoy as well, and all three were glaring at the blond.

Malfoy sneered at them, before hopping onto his broom and taking to the air. "Come and get it!"

"Come on, Malfoy, this is ridiculous." Blake said, stepping out of line and taking Ron's broom away from him, before the red head got himself in trouble or hurt. "There's no need to be a prat."

"What...scared, Knight?" Malfoy asked with a new challenge alight in his eyes, where before he looked to be having fun messing with the three Gryffindors, he now had a predatory look in his grey eyes. "You talk big, strut around like you own the place...don't tell me you're afraid to fly."

"This has nothing to do with fear. You're just being stupid." Blake said factually, keeping the anger rising within him out of his voice.

"So much for house honor and the Knight's valiant name." Malfoy jeered at Blake. "Your weak, Knight. You can't even defend your house's precious golden boy, too scared to come up here. Pathetic."

"I am running out of patience for this childish game, Malfoy." Blake said in a chilled and restrained tone. "Get back down here and hand over the ball, before I do something we'll both greatly regret."

"Come and get it." Malfoy goaded one last time and then flew higher. He called over his shoulder. "Come on, Knight, or you going to stay down there and go back into hiding like the true coward we all know you are?"

"You better hope you can fly, Malfoy!" Blake yelled, as he instinctually mounted the broom in his hand and pushed off the ground at an alarming speed. He barely heard Daphne swear in a way that no pureblood lady should.

Blake shot at Malfoy at full speed. Malfoy took off with wide and alarmed eyes. Blake easily caught up to him and out maneuvered him. He wheeled around in front of the blond and brought him to a sharp stop. Blake reached out grabbed Malfoy's broom handle and yanked the blond closer.

"Give it over, before I throw you off your broom." Blake hissed dangerously.

"G-go get it." Malfoy said trying not to sound terrified and threw the small ball as hard as he could.

Blake gave Malfoy's broom one more unstable jerk, before twisting around and shooting off for the ball. He could easily see it arching through the sky. He laid flat on the broom, coaxing the maximum speed out of it, as he tracked the balls descending movements. The ball grew closer to the ground with each passing second. Blake kicked his broom into a dangerous dive. He barely caught the small glass object inches from the ground. The second the ball was in his hand, he pushed his broom level to the ground, while simultaneously pushing himself up to stand on the broom to prevent from scrapping his knees and tumbling at such a dangerous speed. He'd done it a million times at home. All his train made it seem impossibly easy to keep his balance.

He sped across the grass for a short ways, before shifting his weight and calling the broom to rise back into the air. He dropped back down to a sitting position, once he could easily clear the ground. He steered the old broom back over to the crowd, only to be greeted with shell shocked stares, as he landed softly in the grass. He walked over to Ron and took the red heads limp hand in his. He placed the small ball within Ron's palm and clasped his fingers around it, before letting Ron's hand drop back down to his side. He then turned to round on Malfoy, but a crisp yell from the castle froze him in his place.

"BLAKE KNIGHT!"

Blake looked back towards the castle and saw Professor McGonagall heading for them.

Crap. Blake mentally cursed, before turning to face the Professor with his head held high.

"Never – in all my time at Hogwarts –" The stern woman began, but cut off speechlessly. Shock seemed to be her predominate emotion, but Blake could see a flare of anger in her eyes. "– how dare you – might have broken your neck – your father – dear Merlin your father –"

"Professor, Malfoy goaded him into –" Dean began to protest.

"Be quite, Mr. Thomas –" Professor McGonagall said sharply.

"But Malfoy –" Ron said, refusing to back down.

"That's enough, Mr. Weasley. Knight, follow me, now." Professor McGonagall ordered with stern eyes.

"If you're taking me to Headmaster Dumbledore, I require Carter Mason's presence." Blake said without moving.

"Yes, yes, now come." Professor McGonagall said seemingly oblivious to the actual words he just spoke and beckoned him to follow her.

Resigned to fate, Blake trailed after her and back up to the castle. He was done for. His father was going to be so mad. Carter would frown at him. But Nick...Nick would just look at him with disappointed eyes and that would be all the worse. He shouldn't have given into Malfoy's goading. He really shouldn't have, but the stupid pounce just got on his nerves with his constant insult of the Knight name. He really should have dumped Malfoy off his broom, when he had the chance. It would have been doing the world a favor. Senior Malfoy shouldn't have been allowed to reproduce in the first place. Little Malfoy was proof of that.

Blake came to an abrupt halt behind Professor McGonagall. He hadn't even noticed that they entered the castle, much less climbed several flights of stairs. He looked around and was surprised that she led him to a classroom door and not the Headmaster's office. She opened the door and stuck her head in.

"Excuse me, Professor Flitwick, could I borrow Wood for a moment?"

Blake's brow furrowed. She wasn't going to hit him, was she? His father would kill her.

"Ma'am," Blake began in warning, "that would be a mista–"

Blake fell silent, as a burly looking fifth-year boy exited the classroom. The boy's brown eyes looked questioningly from Professor McGonagall towards Blake.

"Follow me, you two." Professor McGonagall said and then led them up the corridor.

Blake followed after her a bit bewildered. He took comfort in the fact that the boy, Wood, seemed just as confused as he was.

"In here." Professor McGonagall said and beckoned them into a vacant classroom. Blake couldn't help but notice that there were various obscenities written on the blackboard. He scowled at the offensive comments and wondered who dared to write such things for public viewing. His attention was drawn back to Professor McGonagall, as she shut the door with a sharp snap and then turned to face them.

"Mr. Knight, this is Oliver Wood. Wood – I've found you a Seeker." Professor McGonagall said with restrained excitement, while looking Blake over appraisingly.

Blake was sure his jaw hit the floor with how widely he gapped at hearing those words. Surely this was a joke. She wasn't about to make him – a first-year, a Knight – Gryffindor's Seeker. He just stared at Professor McGonagall in disbelief, as she reassured Wood that she was entirely serious about the appointment. His attention finally snapped back to focus at the mention of his name.

"Sorry, Professor, can you repeat that, please?" Blake requested still bewildered, but no longer in a complete state of shock.

"How much experience do you have on a broom, Mr. Knight?" Professor McGonagall asked crisply.

"I've been flying for two years, and for the last year, I've trained specifically to the Seeker position." Blake answered. The words flowing from his mouth without thought, as his mind continued to attempt to grasp onto what exactly was happening.

"Who trained you?" Wood asked eagerly and with great interest.

"My father and Eugen Dalca." Blake said in an offhanded manner, as he thought over the events of the last fifteen minutes. Surely this wasn't happening. Professor McGonagall didn't like him. Why would she not take the opportunity to boot him out?

"Dalca..." Wood managed to get out, before going into a dead faint.

The older boy's sudden tumble was what finally brought Blake around fully. Blake looked down at the unconscious boy on the floor and then up to his Head of House, only to find the woman openly staring at him and once again speechless.

"Are you going to wake him up, or should I?" Blake asked and looked back down to Wood. When Professor McGonagall didn't move, he said. "I suppose I will wake him up then."

"Rennervate." Blake said, as he waved his wand over Wood.

The boy sat up the instant consciousness dawned on him. He looked up at Blake with wide eyes, before quickly pushing himself off the floor and crossing over to Blake. He latched onto Blake's shoulders and bent down slightly to look into his face.

"The Eugen Dalca, as in the man who caught the snitch and solely won the World Cup for Romania against Peru last year?" Wood asked in a desperate plea.

"Uh...yes." Blake nodded, while trying to escape the boy's grasp without causing too much fuss.

"I could kiss you!" Wood said looking absolutely thrilled. "How good are you?" He asked frantically, before looking up to Professor McGonagall. "How good is he?"

"He caught a glass ball smaller than a snitch only inches off the ground after a fifty-foot dive." Professor McGonagall said curtly. "Didn't even suffer a scratch and came out of it standing on his broom. Charlie Weasley couldn't have done it. The closest I've seen anyone come in matching his ability is James Potter, and not even he could have pulled off such a stunt."

Wood looked like he was soaring and that the entire world had just turned to one of sunshine and daises. That every dream he ever had had come true and that he was just told he'd live a very long and extraordinarily happy life.

"What's your broom?" Wood asked elatedly, as he turned his attention back to Blake.

"A Nimbus 1090 –" Blake began, but never got to finish.

"A 1090!" Wood whooped with glee and began doing some sort of happy jig.

"I shall speak to Professor Dumbledore and see if we can't bend the first-year rule. Heaven knows, we need a better team than last year. Flattened in that last match by Slytherin, I couldn't look Severus Snape in the face for weeks..." Professor McGonagall aimed a stern look at Blake, as she trailed off. "Don't make me regret not punishing you instead."

"I won't, ma'am." Blake promised seriously. This alternative was much more enjoyable than what would have been waiting for him, if he got himself kicked out of Hogwarts after only attending for a little less than two weeks.

"Dalca, trained by Eugen Dalca..." Wood said dreamily, as he collapsed into a chair.

—

"Unbelievable, bloody unbelievable!" Blaise exclaimed, as he walked into the Great Hall with Blake.

"I know. I thought I was toast." Blake agreed with a large grin.

"Seeker." Daphne hissed, shaking her head. "You nearly kill yourself and they make you seeker."

"I was nowhere close to killing myself." Blake refuted stubbornly.

"Inches, inches from colliding with the ground." Daphne growled at him, while holding up her right forefinger and thumb as proof of how close he had come.

"But I didn't." Blake pointed out. "And that is all that matters in the end."

"Reckless, stupid, idiotic –" Daphne ranted.

"Gryffindor." Blake supplied with a cheek grin.

Daphne looked about ready to hex him.

"Come now, Daphne." Blaise said, putting an arm around Daphne's shoulder and directing her to the Slytherin table. "Let's just go calm down."

Daphne glared at Blake, but let Blaise pull her away. The fire in her green eyes promised a good hexing, if Blake so stupidly risked his life again.

Blake just shook his head and headed over to the Gryffindor table. The second he sat down, Neville, Dean, Seamus, and Ron clamored around him.

"Is it true? Are you seeker?" Ron asked eagerly.

Blake nodded, as he dipped up a plate of dinner. He was startled, when various exclamation of glee sounded across from him. He looked up to see the four positively beaming.

"The Slytherins don't stand a chance!" Seamus shouted confidently.

"The Cup will be ours for sure!" Neville agreed with excitement.

"Having a last meal, Knight?" Malfoy's annoyingly sneering voice cut into the celebrations.

Blake and his dorm mates whipped their heads around to see Malfoy standing a few feet away with the oafs, Crabbe and Goyle, standing behind him. Both were cracking their knuckles threateningly.

"What's it to you?" Neville demanded with hard eyes trained on Malfoy.

"You're not wanted here, Malfoy. Go run back to your slimy snake table." Ron ordered in a hot temper.

Malfoy just smirked and looked to Blake. "Nice guard dogs, Knight. Still a coward I see...hiding behind others."

"He's not hiding behind anyone. He could take you any day." Seamus cut in, before Blake could even respond for himself.

"Yeah, you couldn't face him one on one." Dean jibed. "We all saw how scared you were up in the air, when you didn't have dumb and dumber at your back. If anyone's a coward, it's you."

"I could take him on, anytime, anywhere, whenever I want." Draco sneered at Dean, before looking back to Blake. "Midnight tonight, if you want. A wizard's duel...wands only – no contact. That is, if you're not too scared?"

"He's not. He'll be there." Ron said with a glare of loathing at Draco.

"Wait –" Blake began, not at all interested in causing trouble after barely escaping his last run in only a few hours earlier. Having a duel with Malfoy was certain trouble. Being out of the common room afterhours was just asking for it.

"I'm his second." Neville declared confidently, ignoring Blake's protest. "Who's yours?"

"Neville, I don't think –" Blake started, before being cut off once again.

"Crabbe." Draco said and gestured to the shorter lump to his right. "We'll meet you in the trophy room. Midnight, all right?"

"Midnight." Neville confirmed.

Draco quickly walked off with Crabbe and Goyle lumbering after him. Blake glared at the four Gryffindor boys, as they resettled themselves across from him.

"Are you trying to get me thrown out?" Blake demanded of Neville.

"What do you mean?" Neville asked, looking genuinely confused.

With a closed off and emotionless face, Blake rather violently grabbed up a roll from the nearest bread platter and got up from the Gryffindor Table. Without saying a word to the four, he left the Great Hall. Once back in his dorm room, he took out his homework and started on it, while nibbling on the roll he took. He glared down at his

parchment, as he wrote out the first few lines for his transfigurations essay.

Blake finished the assignment a little after seven. He lay down to take a nap, knowing that his dorm mates would wake him up around midnight and surely interrupt his sleep. They weren't going to let him skive off. This had become a matter of Gryffindor Pride, and while he thought this would result in a trap of some sort – never trust a Malfoy – he knew it was also a matter of Knight Pride. He would go, and if Malfoy didn't show, then it would be Malfoy who was made the fool. It would be Malfoy who shamed his family by not honoring the challenge he set forth. He was a Knight, and it was by his honor that he would face the ponce, if the Slytherin boy actually showed up.

—

Blake, Neville, Ron, Seamus, and Dean slowly crept down the stairs of the boys dorms. It was half-past eleven and nearly everyone was sound asleep. However, there was still the risk of a few older-years still being awake, so they took it slow – being as silent as possible. The fire was nothing but embers in the fireplace, as they crossed the dark, empty common room over to the portrait hole. Blake pushed the portrait open a bit and peeked his head out, only to have a hand grab his arm.

Blake spun around to see Neville, Ron, Seamus, and Dean all looking guilty and Percy staring down at him. Blake let the portrait close.

"Filch is on patrol for the next hour. Snape will take over then." Percy said seriously, ignoring the other four Gryffindor boys and looking solely at Blake. "Snape will have your head, if he can get it. So I strongly suggest you get back within the hour and take as many secret passageways as you know. Just be careful, alright?"

"I will." Blake promised

Percy nodded in acceptance and then walked off for the boys dorms without another word.

"What was that?" Ron demanded, as he stared after his brother.

"Nothing of your concern at the moment." Blake said with a quelling look aimed at the young red head. When Ron looked thoroughly cowed, Blake once again opened the portrait. Seeing a completely empty hall, Blake stepped out of the common room and led the others down the dark corridor.

They all shuffled along as quietly as possible, turning down a few hallways and then going up a set of hidden stairs to the third floor and finally to the trophy room. The various cups, shields, plaques, and badges glimmered in the moon light streaming in the room from the high windows. Blake swept his eyes around in the darkness – Malfoy was nowhere to be seen. They waited in silence for the Malfoy heir. As the minutes ticked by, Blake and his dorm mates grew more anxious.

"He's late. He probably chickened out." Ron whispered at ten minutes past the hour.

A scutter of noise from the next room made them all pause. Blake had his wand in his hand in an instant and pointed at the far entrance of the room.

"Sniff around, my sweet, they might be lurking in a corner." The distinctive voice of Filch said, clearly speaking to his cat, Mrs. Norris.

Blake's heart hammered in his chest, as he realized that not only did Malfoy not show, he had set the caretaker after him. The other four looked just as panicked and angry as Blake did. Blake reached out and took Neville's arm. He quickly dragged the blond boy with him towards a secondary exit. The other three followed after them hurriedly. Dean barely made it around the corner, as Filch entered the trophy room.

"They're in here somewhere." Filch muttered. "Probably hiding."

"Come on." Blake said in a barely audible whisper and then headed down the hall in a direction that would take them furthest away from Filch.

They could hear Filch getting closer and closer, as they tried to escape as silently as possible. Blake felt frustration rise within him at the fact that the other four were clumsy and their foot falls were easy to make out. Just when he was thinking about seriously leaving

them behind, Dean tripped with a loud clatter to the ground and an even louder exclamation.

"OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO RUN!" Ron yelled in panicked realization, as Seamus hastily helped Dean up and Filch's footsteps quickened.

They all took off down the hall without a care for how much noise they were making. Blake lead them darting down corridors and around different twists and turns, getting lost in the maze of Hogwarts. He hurriedly pulled open a hidden passageway, and they all clamored into it. They ran through the darkness to the opposite end and came out next to the Charms classroom.

"I think we lost him." Seamus panted, as they stopped for a rest.

Blake looked at the four bent over and leaning against the wall for support in disgust and annoyance. "You lot are in terrible shape. Have you ever heard of exercise?"

"Is this really the time, Knight?" Ron asked furious, as he gasped for breath and held a stitch in his side. He glared at Blake, who didn't seem affected by their little jaunt at all.

"We should keep moving." Blake told them impatiently.

"Yeah." Dean agreed, pushing himself up. He seemed to be in at least a bit better shape than the others.

The other three reluctantly nodded and stood as well. They cautiously crept down the charms corridor, looking out for anymore signs of danger. They had only made it a few paces down, when Peeves shot out of one of the classrooms in front of them. The second the poltergeist saw them, he squealed in delight.

"Be quiet, Peeves. Please be quiet." Neville begged desperately.

Peeves cackled at him and swooped down upon them.

"Ickle Firsties out of bed! Naughty, naughty, you'll get caught." Peeves sang.

"Not if you don't give us away." Blake pointed out with a glare at Peeves.

"Should tell Filch, I should." Peeves said with a wicked glint in his eyes and blocking their path. "It would be for your own good."

"Move out of the way." Ron snapped and lunged towards Peeves.

"STUDENTS OUT OF BED!" Peeves yelled loudly. "STUDENTS OUT OF BED DOWN THE CHARMS CORRIDOR!"

Blake darted around the poltergeist and the others followed after him. They ran not knowing quite where to run to. They came to the end of the corridor and slammed into the door there.

"It's lock!" Neville exclaimed in a panic, as he jiggled the handle.

"We're done for!" Seamus whined.

They could hear Filch's fast footsteps approaching and closing in on them.

"Move!" Blake hissed and pushed Neville out of the way. He jabbed his wand at the doorknob. "Alohomora."

There was a click, as the lock turned over. Blake carelessly yanked the door open and they all piled inside and quickly shut the door after them. Blake pressed his ear to the door and could hear Filch fast approaching. He hoped they would be safe, as the caretaker believed the door locked.

"Which way did they go, Peeves?" Filch asked urgently. "Quick, tell me."

"Say 'please.'"

"Don't mess with me, Peeves, now where did they go?"

"Shan't say nothing if you don't say please." Peeves said in a sing-song voice.

"All right – please."

"NOTHING! Ha Haaa! Told you I wouldn't say nothing if you didn't say please! Ha Ha! Haaaaaa!"

The next second, Blake heard the sound of Peeves whooshing off, and Filch cursing in rage, as he retreated up the hall.

"That was close." Seamus said, breathing in relief.

"Err...guys." Dean squeaked fearfully.

Blake turned with Neville, Ron, and Seamus to see what Dean's problem was. Blake froze in horror and his eyes grew wide at the sight before him. The room was not a room after all, and they were not as alone as they thought. Blake knew exactly where they were now. They were in the forbidden corridor, and his father was certain to kill him, if the monster in front of him didn't.

There were six large eyes staring down at them from three large snarling heads attached to one very, very large dog body. Saliva dripped in giant globs from its mouths, as the thing let out a vicious growl and lunged forward.

Neville clattered at the doorknob, shaking in fear. Somehow he managed to get it open and miraculously they all managed to fly out of the corridor in the space of a second. The five worked together to shut the door, as the three jaws snapped after them. Once they managed to get the door shut, they looked at each other in silent agreement and then took off running for their common room like fiendfyre was chasing them.

They reached the Fat Lady still in a panic five minutes later.

"Where on earth have you all been?" The Fat Lady asked sternly.

"Pig snout! Pig snout! Pig snout!" Neville said rapidly.

The Fat Lady swung open, and they all rushed into the safety of their common room and up to their dorm. Blake was the last to enter. He shut their door and locked it, before backing away cautiously to his bed.

"What was that?" Ron asked, breaking the tense silence of the room.

"A cerberus guarding the forbidden corridor." Blake said numbly, as he sat down on his bed.

"But why would they put something like that in a school?" Seamus asked wildly. "What could possibly require that kind of guarding? I didn't see anything worth value."

"I don't know about you, but I wasn't looking at anything but the three bloody heads." Dean said shaking. "I'm gonna have nightmares, I am."

"W-we should sleep." Neville said, still looking quite frightened.

"Yeah." Ron uttered with a nod of agreement.

Silence filled the room, as they all got into bed. Blake pulled his bed hanging closed and set a silencing ward around him. He settled in for a troubled night's sleep, as he thought of the letter he'd write tomorrow and the reaction said letter would get from his father.

Thanks for all the support and being a patient audience. It is a big help. Your comments mean a lot to me, and I think the evidence of how much they have helped me is in the quality of my writing. I feel that I'm improving constantly, and it is really thanks to you all that I am.

Anyways, this is one of my favorite chapters in the first book, so it took me a while to figure out how to do it justice and add in my own flare. I know it took a while, but know that I promise not to abandon this fic. I will always be back.

So...thanks goes to the following for your very helpful reviews. You guys are awesome!

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Hello;

zhrh ash-sh'r – since I have no other way to respond to you. Blake is
a black panther animagus, and no, he is not register. :)

chp14